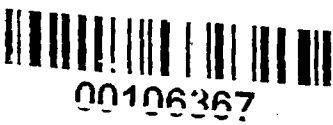
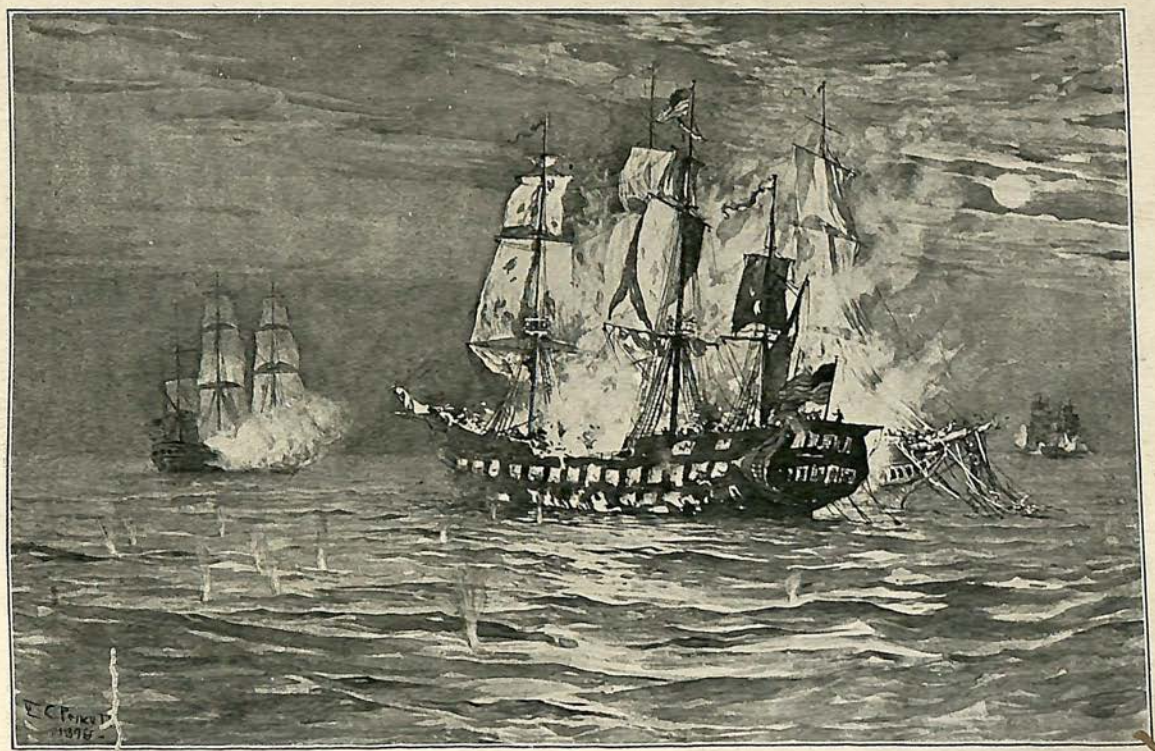
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SEA FIGHTERS FROM DRAKE TO FARRAGUT



Engagement between the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Serapis*

SEA FIGHTERS FROM DRAKE TO FARRAGUT

BY

JESSIE PEABODY FROTHINGHAM

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SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

1544–1596

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

CHAPTER I

THE HERO OF SEA-ROMANCE

No name, in England's annals of the sea, has been surrounded with so dazzling a setting of romance as that of Sir Francis Drake. During his lifetime his adventures found no place in sober history. They invaded the realm of folk-lore and took strong hold on the popular fancy in the shape of marvellous tales and legends. But rising out of this wonderland of romance Drake will always take his place in history as a master in strategy, one of the most skilful of navigators, the leader in the movement which established England's supremacy on the sea, and the first great admiral in the development of modern naval science, which had its cradle in England, and which substituted the sailing-navy for the ancient rowing-navy.

The stirring times into which Drake was born acted as a forcing-house for the growth of character. Boys turned into men at a bound. Bred

in the nursery to the tune of war and revolution, they were trained by danger and privation to fight battles at an age when the boy of to-day is making ready for college. The youths of puritan England, rudely moulded in the preparatory school of life, were formed for a future of adventure and daring by hardships which to us appear inconceivable.

The strange mixture of lax moral standards and fierce religious passion and bigotry, the light esteem in which human life was held, the rapid succession of startling events, the persecutions carried on in the name of a holy cause,— all these things went to forge men of singular and violent contrasts. Drake, the foremost sailor of the Reformation, the chief pirate of Queen Elizabeth, one of the greatest of England's admirals, was one of these men.

Born in 1544 in the heat of the strife between catholics and protestants, little Francis drew in with his earliest breath a fierce hatred of Spain and a mastering love of the sea. His father, Edmund Drake, a zealous protestant with a gift for preaching, belonged to a small democratic party near Tavistock, in catholic Devon. The first glimpse we have of the future sea king is when his father fled with him from a sudden outburst of catholic violence and took refuge on St. Nicholas Island, in the harbor of Plymouth. The child was only six, curly-headed and blue-eyed,

but his earliest memories were of hardships and danger.

When we next look for him we find him climbing the masts of his floating home, so well was destiny moulding the future man. In Chatham reach, beyond the dockyard, at the mouth of the Medway, was the anchorage of vessels when out of commission, of war-ships, and of old and useless hulks. There the protestant preacher was given an appointment, under King Edward, as "Reader of Prayers to the Royal Navy," and was assigned a rotting hulk as a dwelling-place. So the boy Francis played among the masts, his nursery was in the midst of the war-ships' guns, he fell asleep rocked by the waves to the lullaby of the sailors' songs and the rush of the tide.

Under Edward VI, and with the patronage of the powerful Earl of Bedford, the protestant preacher hoped to place his boys in the navy, but a rude change shattered this expectation at a stroke. King Edward died, "Bloody" Mary, the catholic Queen, succeeded to the English throne, and the land was threatened with a prince of Spain as husband to the Queen. Then it was that the bursting storm of the Reformation threw all England into turmoil. Edmund Drake lost his position and was forced to send his sons into the world alone, to work out their own future. Francis was apprenticed as ship-boy on a craft that carried on a coasting trade with France and Hol-

land, and on this channel coaster, in privation and exposure, the sailor lad learned his severest lessons of experience. While his body was being steeled to every hardship, his spirit was trained for future revenges on the Spanish Main. Passionate tales of Inquisition horrors were told by Flemish refugees on quay and shipboard. Philip's persecutions in the Netherlands fanned the flame of the English Reformation, and Francis Drake found himself in the centre of the hottest frenzy of religious passion. It was in this school that he acquired that implacable hatred of the very name of Spain which grew to be the motive power of his career.

Meanwhile events followed one another rapidly. Bloody Mary had died, Elizabeth reigned, and the protestants were again in favor. Francis had grown from lad to youth; his master skipper had died and had left him his little craft on which to begin life as an independent trader. Open war with Spain had not yet been declared; but cruel reprisals by private individuals on both sides were rapidly paving the way for the coming rupture. The Channel swarmed with rovers. Four hundred adventurers swept the narrow seas in search of plunder. Queen Elizabeth, in her misunderstanding with France, had let loose the privateers armed with letters of marque to worry the French by outrages on their trade. But the wild pirate crews, once started on the scent of booty, were not to be held in the leash of crown commissions.

The enormous wealth of the Spanish trade courted depredation. Spanish galleons were chased and scuttled. Catholic vessels were looted. Rich cargoes of saffron, cochineal, silk, wool, gold, silver, pearls and precious stones, linen, tapestry, and wine were carried off to the pirates' lairs on the Isle of Wight, and in the creeks and inlets of the Irish coast. In revenge English ships were seized in Spanish ports, and English sailors lay in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

Drake was not the man to be left behind when others were roving the seas. He had given up independent trading. In fact, trading had become impossible. And he had entered the service of his famous kinsmen, Captain John and Captain William Hawkins, the rich ship-owners and pirate merchants of Plymouth. The chief seaport town of picturesque Devon might well have been called one of the pirate centres of the English coast. Its harbor was large and safe, and many precious cargoes, obtained by foul means as well as fair, were brought in by daring adventurers who had scoured the narrow sea in search of riches. Neither gold nor excitement were hard to find in those days, and Plymouth became, according to an old chronicler of Devon, "a port so famous that it had a kind of invitation, from the commodiousness thereof, to maritime noble actions."

These maritime actions, however, were not always noble. It was Sir John Hawkins of

Armada renown who was the first to initiate the English into "the execrable iniquities of the African slave trade," which left a "foul blot" on his famous voyages to the West Indies. The Hawkinses of Plymouth were some of the great merchant princes of the sixteenth century. William Hawkins, the father of Sir John, had been the first to carry English trade to the coast of Brazil. He also made a number of voyages to the Canary Islands, and it was on these expeditions that John Hawkins, who accompanied his father, came to know of the riches of the West Indies, and the money value of the slave trade.

John Hawkins was a son of his age, with a moral sense no stricter than that of most of his fellow-men. The slave trade was not new. Spaniards and Portuguese had practised it for generations, and the customs of the Middle Ages had long before sanctioned the use of Moslem prisoners as galley slaves. Indian slavery in the West Indies had become a crying abuse, and it was mainly to deliver the freeborn, eagle-souled Indians from the bonds of forced labor that the inferior-raced negro was substituted in slavery. It was Las Casas, in the fifteenth century, who, in the name of humanity, established that negro slavery which Lincoln, more than three hundred years later, abolished in the name of the same humanity.

Before the time of John Hawkins the English had not yet soiled their hands with the African

trade. The first venture was made in 1562 by "the right worshipful and valiant knight, Sir John Hawkins." This was four years before Francis Drake cast in his lot with his kinsmen. Drake first followed William Hawkins and George Fenner, and took part in that glorious action when with one ship and a pinnace Fenner held a gallant stand for two days against six Portuguese gunboats and a large galleasse, and finally forced them to retire.

Afterward he sailed under Captain Lovell on the fatal expedition to the West Indies, when he had his first sight of those fabled islands, and, at Rio de la Hacha on the Spanish Main, his first experience of Spanish treachery, the memory of which never left him, and, coupled with the longing for revenge, led him back in the last years of his life to the scene of his first reverse.

In October, 1567, Drake set sail from Plymouth harbor as pilot to John Hawkins, with a squadron of six vessels armed and victualled for a long voyage, on the expedition which turned the scale of commercial supremacy and completed the antagonism of England and Spain.

In Queen Elizabeth's time neither the navy nor the maritime commerce of England were established on a regular footing. The navy, used simply as an adjunct to the army, had remained undeveloped as an independent instrument of national power, and the vastness of its resources

were still undreamed of. Later on, Drake proved the wonderful possibilities of a strongly equipped fleet in war time, by turning the enemy's coast-line into the centre of hostilities, and by destroying his trade with foreign countries.

But meanwhile the fleets of commerce and war were intermingled. Queen Elizabeth in time of peace used her men-of-war for commerce, while in war time she supplemented her scanty squadrons by merchantmen. In this way it became difficult to draw the line between official naval expeditions and private commercial enterprises, which in those days were frequently synonymous to buccaneering. It often happened that the Queen was one of the shareholders in the filibustering expeditions of Hawkins and Drake, and contributed some ships of war to the outfit. She was too much allured by the prospect of untold riches in gold, pearls, and precious stones to resist the temptation of enriching her private coffers by becoming a secret partner in the buccaneering ventures of her favorite pirates.

But while allowing her cupidity to get the better of her conscience, she was careful to assume public ignorance, and even disapproval of the practices of her unruly subjects, especially when Spanish ambassadors called peremptorily for satisfaction. And although her partners in adventure were sure of a cordial welcome to their precious cargoes, they were not always so certain as to the

personal reception they might receive at the hands of the Queen. It might be the gallows; it might be knighthood.

But the game was worth the candle, and so it was that on that October day in 1567 Hawkins and Drake sailed out of Plymouth harbor with what amounted to a naval squadron, loaded with ammunition and even field artillery, ostensibly furnished by Sir William Garrard & Co., and costing about $650,000, but provided by the Queen with two ships of war, the *Minion* and the *Jesus*. Elizabeth herself never contributed money; she left that to the other shareholders, even to the fitting out of her own war-ships.

The squadron met with bad weather from the very first. Near Cape Finisterre a violent storm damaged and scattered many of the vessels, but they succeeded in reaching their first rendezvous at the Canary Islands. From there they sailed southward to the coast of Guinea, in western Africa, where the traders spent several months in collecting negroes. Partly by means of the sword, and partly by exchange of scarlet coats and beads, they succeeded in storing away in their holds as many as five hundred slaves. Thus equipped with trading material, they crossed over to the Caribbean Sea, reaching the West Indies in the following March.

It was not so easy as they had hoped to dispose of their cargo, for traffic with the English

had been forbidden in the colonies by the Spanish government. But the blandishments of the adventurers and the cupidity of the natives combined to bring about satisfactory results, and in obstinate cases there was always the resource of arms. Rio de la Hacha, having presumptuously fired upon the pirate ships, received her recompense. The port was blockaded, the defences stormed, and the town carried by assault. Then in secret, under cover of the night, the unlawful trade began, and two hundred slaves were exchanged for gold, silver and pearls, sugar, and hide.

Hawkins and Drake were so well pleased with their valuable cargo that they decided not to venture a landing, but to sail direct for home. Unhappily they had tarried too long in those treacherous waters. Two fierce *furicanos*, or hurricanes, disabled the squadron and obliged them to seek shelter in San Juan de Ulua, or Vera Cruz, the port of the City of Mexico.

In the harbor the English adventurers found a Spanish merchant fleet of twelve vessels unarmed and laden with the year's produce of the West Indies, — gold and silver to the amount of $10,000,000. It lay at anchor waiting for the escort, which was hourly expected, to convoy it on the home-bound voyage. On the following morning the fleet of Spain appeared outside the harbor. Hawkins found himself in a difficult

position; he was obliged to choose between two evils. Either he could trust to Spanish protestations and Spanish honor to be left unmolested, or he could keep the enemy's fleet from entering the harbor and leave it to the mercy of the winds and waves, to be completely destroyed by the first storm, then seize the treasure and make off for merry England. But this meant the shipwreck to Spain of more than $22,000,000, and Hawkins feared the displeasure of the Queen. It would doubtless have hurried on the rupture with Spain.

Hawkins chose to rely upon the promise of the Spaniards, and allowed the fleet to enter the harbor. His reward was treason. In spite of sacred oaths and solemn pledges, the wily Spaniards fell suddenly upon the English squadron and overwhelmed it with a vastly superior force. The resistance was desperate; the adventurers fought for their lives, but being wholly unprepared for the dastardly attack, they could save but few of their vessels. The smaller craft were sunk, and the *Jesus* was so shattered that they were obliged to abandon it with all its precious spoils. The *Minion*, with Hawkins on board, and the little *Judith*, with Drake, alone escaped on that fatal night. Riddled with shot and terribly damaged, the crews half starved, they straggled homeward and crept into Plymouth harbor without a remnant of their immense cargo.

CHAPTER II

CHIEF PIRATE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

DRAKE lost no time. He rode post-haste to London to lay his grievances before the Queen, and urge her to demand redress for the outrages that had been offered him. Elizabeth lent a willing ear to the secret plans of her chief pirate. As yet she could not challenge Philip; but the relations between England and Spain grew more strained, trade was stopped, and the Queen covertly abetted the daring schemes of reprisal planned by her foiled adventurer. Drake meant to deal a heavy blow to Spain, but he was in no hurry. He needed preparation, and his revenge could wait.

In 1570, two small vessels, the *Dragon* and the *Swan*, stole unnoticed out of Plymouth harbor bound on a secret mission. Drake was in command, and his object was to reconnoitre the West Indies and gain knowledge and information so that he might return some day and strike at their most vulnerable spot. In the following year a second expedition went out, this time with the *Swan* alone. In those two years Drake saw what he wanted to see, and laid his plans for the future.

Prepared to put his reckless scheme into execution, on Whitsunday Eve, in 1572, Drake set sail from Plymouth at the head of a tiny squadron and a handful of men.[1] The *Pascha* of seventy tons, Drake's flag-ship, led the van; and the rear was brought up by the *Swan*, of twenty-five tons, with his brother John Drake as captain. This was all: two small vessels, one of which was less than a quarter the size of the smallest class of modern channel coasters, and the other no heavier than a revenue cutter of to-day. These toy men-of-war were fitted out with every warlike device, munition, artillery, tools, and three small pinnaces made to be taken apart and set up at short notice. The crews numbered seventy-three men, of whom only one was over thirty years of age. It seemed like a boy's crazy venture.

With a favorable wind the squadron sailed without a stop until it had its first sight of Guadaloupe, one of the Leeward Isles, in the West Indian group. On reaching Port Pheasant, a small, land-locked harbor in the Gulf of Darien on the mainland, Drake dropped anchor and started to set up his pinnaces. It was a safe bay and convenient for his purpose. While in the

[1] The most interesting accounts of Drake's voyages are the original relations, written by some of his followers or contemporaries, and published in the *English Garner*, by Edward Arber, Vol. V, and in the volumes of the Hakluyt Society. Among modern works, Julian Corbett's *Sir Francis Drake* and his *Drake and the Tudor Navy* are stirring and comprehensive.

midst of his work, a strange squadron hove in sight. It proved to be nothing more dangerous than a vessel belonging to the well-known pirate of the Isle of Wight, Ned Horsey. Captain Ranse was in command and was bringing in a Spanish caravel and a shallop that he had captured. The two adventurers decided to join forces; and when, seven days later, the united squadrons crept out of the hidden harbor, they presented no mean appearance.

Westward along the coast they stole toward Nombre de Dios, the treasure-house of the Spanish Main, and in a week's time a tiny force lay at midnight under the bluff, at the point of the harbor. Drake, with seventy-three men, three pinnaces, and one shallop, waited breathlessly for the breaking of the dawn, the time appointed for the attack. Twenty-four of the men were armed with muskets, the rest with pikes and bows, and four men had been selected for the marine band and provided with drums and trumpets to inspire the crew and alarm the natives.

Silently the young and untried hands waited in the shadows of the night until their nerves were strained to the highest tension. In awed whispers they retailed to one another the reports that had come to them of the strength of the town and of the Spanish troops near at hand. Then as the light of the rising moon began to illumine the sky, Drake, to break the spell, and under

pretence that the day was dawning, ordered the assault.

Twelve men were left to hold the pinnaces, so as to make sure of a safe retreat. The rest of the company were divided into two groups, and advanced upon the Plaza from different sides. Six fire-pikes with blazing tow lighted the way, and cast a lurid glow over the streets; the drums and trumpets sounded with maddening din. But the town had been aroused; the great church bell was clanging out the alarm, and the people ran hither and thither, with cries and shouts that grew into a threatening roar. The soldiers had been called to arms, and at the end of the Plaza, near the Panama gate, they were drawn up to receive the attack.

A sharp volley of shot greeted Drake and his men full in the face. But the Englishmen, nothing daunted, let fly their roving arrows, and then, hand to hand, with pike and sword, they closed upon the Spaniards. Lashed by the arrows and startled by the blinding flame of the fire-pikes, the ranks of the Spaniards began to waver. Then panic seized them, their arms were thrown away, and in confusion and terror they fled through the Panama gate.

The Plaza was left in the hands of the adventurers. Drake placed a guard at the entrances, and with the rest of his men took possession of the governor's house. There, in a lower room, a

blaze of treasure met their eyes. Great silver bars, seventy feet long, ten feet wide, and twelve feet high, were piled against the wall, and glinted in the light. The poor Devon lads looked in half-dazed wonder at the unaccustomed sight; but Drake ordered not a bar to be touched. Spanish soldiers were still in the town, and the treasure-house of the King stood near the water's edge, stored with far greater wonders of gold and precious stones, enough to overflow their pinnaces.

At this moment some of the men came running from the shore with the report that the pinnaces were in danger of being captured. On hearing this news, Drake ordered a party under John Oxenheim to reconnoitre the shore, and made a rendezvous at the treasure-house. Scarcely had they started when a fierce tropical storm burst suddenly over their heads. The thunder roared and the rain fell in torrents, wetting their bow-strings and ruining their powder. By the time they reached the shore, the men had lost their nerve. Even the taunts Drake hurled at them failed to restore their grit.

"I have brought you to the door of the treasure-house of the world," he cried; "blame no one but yourselves if you go away empty!"

Then he stepped forward and ordered them to break into the treasure-house." But as he did so, he fell on his face, and the blood gushed from a

wound in his leg. He had been shot early in the encounter, and had concealed it that his men might not lose heart. His followers lifted him from the ground, and against all his entreaties carried him to his boat; and to preserve their captain's life they abandoned the rich spoil which they had come so far to seek.

Mysteriously the dreaded pirate vanished from sight as suddenly as he had come. For a time he disappeared from the Spaniards' view. But in a hidden bay in the Gulf of Darien, his favorite secret retreat, other and stranger projects were being brewed. With the help of the Maroons, a savage tribe of escaped negro slaves, Drake planned to intercept the gold that was carried on mule packs across the Isthmus to be shipped to Spain. But months must pass before the opening of the dry season when the ambush could be laid, and meanwhile his pinnaces stole from the harbor, swept the seas, held up passing ships, and raided the neighboring coast.

For six months Drake lay in hiding. At first all was cheerful bustle and activity in the tropical camp. Between play and work, the summer and autumn months flew by. Then came the rainy season, and in its train suffering, misfortune, and disease. John Drake was killed in a rash encounter, Joseph Drake died of the pestilence, provisions ran short, and as the sun shone again through the murky, steaming atmosphere, scores

of men dropped dead of the fever. It was a time to try the stoutest heart.

By the last of January, when news finally came that the escort fleet had arrived at Nombre de Dios and the gold was moving in the mule trains from Panama, only forty-five men had survived, out of the original seventy-three who had sailed from Plymouth eight months before. Of these, many were too ill to move, and eighteen youths formed the small band of Englishmen that started on the wild and desperate march across the Cordilleras. The rest of the party of forty-eight were Maroons.

Through the dense forests of magnificent, primeval trees, unlighted by the rays of the sun, the little band crept along the trail in deathlike silence. Four negro guides went on before and marked the path with broken boughs. A week's march brought them to the summit of the pass, and there a marvellous sight met the eyes of the great adventurer. At his feet lay the Atlantic Ocean whose waters he had roved, and on the south rolled the mighty Pacific, the fabled ocean never before seen by English eyes.

Filled with awe and a great wonder he "besought Almighty God, of His goodness, to give him life and leave to sail once in an English ship on that sea!" After years of waiting, his desire was to be finally granted, and this day marked a period in his life of greater importance than all

the reckless escapades of piracy and ambuscade in which his spirit revelled.

Fired with a new hope, he now flung himself down the steep descent to Panama, and on the Nombre de Dios road lay in ambush with his men. The mule trains, laden with gold and jewels, were hourly expected. Through long, weary hours they waited, crouching in the tall grass, silent and breathless.

Presently the tinkle of mule bells came faintly down the road, and the hearts of the Devon lads beat quicker at the thought of the fabulous wealth that lay within their grasp. The moment was at hand for which they had endured months of waiting and of incredible hardships; but the curiosity of one man spoiled the well-laid scheme, and all because he had drunk too deeply of clear *aqua vitæ*. The name of Robert Pike gained unenvied notoriety. He had received orders to lie close to the ground and keep motionless. The safety of the whole party depended on secrecy. But, eager to see with his own eyes whether the coveted treasure was nearing the ambuscade, he raised himself above the protecting grass. He was seen by the enemy, and the alarm was given.

Craftily the Spaniards sent the victual train ahead, while the precious gold packs turned back toward Panama. When Drake and his men, with shouts and cries, leaped from the thicket and fell upon the heavily laden mules, they found not a grain of the rich and coveted booty.

The famous march and ambuscade had failed, but Drake's temper was not one to be tamely thwarted. He now planned a second journey, this time along the coast from Rio Francisco to Nombre de Dios. Meanwhile he played a bewildering game on the Spaniards. He appeared and vanished as if by enchantment. One day he captured and sacked Venta Crux. Within a fortnight he threatened the port of Veragua. His agile pinnaces sped here and there, eastward and westward, picking up Spanish frigates. No one knew where *El Draque* might next appear.

On the morning of the 1st of April a mule train, laden with gold and silver, was travelling along the road to Venta Crux. A mile from the town, within earshot of the carpenters working at the docks, lay an English ambuscade. The mule bells tinkled on the road from Panama. Suddenly the dead silence was broken by a frightful din. The foremost and hindmost mules were seized, and the rest lay down. Volleys of bullets and arrows spread terror among the guard of soldiers. In a panic they fled, leaving the mules and their precious burdens in the hands of the victors.

Swiftly and dexterously the silver bars were hidden in the burrows of the land-crabs, or buried under the gravel of the river bed. The gold was stowed away in shirts and pockets, and with forced marches the Devon lads returned to Rio Francisco. But their pinnaces were nowhere to be

seen. Instead, seven Spanish craft rode in the harbor, and all hope of safety seemed for the moment gone. But when the whole company despaired, Drake's ingenuity found a way of escape.

A raft was built from drifted tree trunks, and, with a biscuit sack for a sail and a tree for a rudder, Drake with three men started on a wild sail over an angry sea lashed into high waves by a fierce wind. The scorching sun beat down upon them, the waves dashed to their shoulders; they sat for six hours in water to their waists, until their strength was almost exhausted. As night came on, in a quiet cove behind a point of land, where they had retreated for shelter, the pinnaces were found. That night Drake rowed back to Rio Francisco, recovered the silver which had been hidden in the holes and sand, took in his men and the treasure, and at the first gray streaks of dawn set sail to join the larger ships.

A fortnight later the English lads started on their homeward journey, laden with a rich booty; for, besides the treasure of gold and silver, they had overhauled two hundred vessels in the Caribbean Sea. After a prosperous home voyage, they sighted the harbor of Plymouth on Sunday, the 9th of August, 1573. It was church time when the little ships sailed into port, but so great was the joy at their return that the congregations hurried down to the docks to greet the successful adventurers.

CHAPTER III

ON THE FABLED OCEAN

DRAKE had returned to England with no wish to rest. Burning with the desire to thread the mazes of the fabled Pacific, he used every effort to persuade the Queen and her counsellors to sanction his mighty project. But contrary influences were at work, and for four years he was obliged to wait. At last his time and opportunity came. Elizabeth contributed a thousand pounds to the expedition, on condition that everything should be kept a profound secret.

In November, 1577, Drake stood on the deck of his ship in his "loose, dark, seaman's shirt, belted at the waist," and his scarlet cap, watching, with who knows what deep fervor and what secret excitement, the squadron riding in Plymouth harbor that was to carry him on his perilous voyage and realize his great dream. His ships were mere cockle-shells, no larger than modern coasters: the *Pelican* of one hundred tons and eighteen guns, the *Elizabeth* of eighty tons, and the *Marigold*, a bark of thirty tons, both carrying sixteen guns, the *Swann*, a provi-

sion ship of fifty tons, and the *Christopher*, a pinnace of fifteen tons. These vessels, manned by a hundred and fifteen men and fourteen boys, were fitted out for a long and dangerous voyage. For munition they carried "cartridges, wildfire, chainshot, guns, pistols, bows, and other weapons."

With this squadron Drake planned to sail into a chartless and unknown ocean, to brave a shadowy world which superstition had peopled with every inconceivable terror of storm, darkness, and fire. To his crew his final destination was a secret, and, when the squadron finally put to sea on the 13th of December, its alleged destination was Alexandria. Not until they had reached the coast of Morocco was the real object of the venture known.

Through stress of gales, fogs, and tempestuous seas, of mutiny, treason, and the tragedy of an ocean lynch-court and an execution off the lonely coast of Patagonia, the storm-tossed fleet kept on its perilous course. A less unflinching spirit than that of Drake would have quailed under the terrible struggle. Only three out of the five ships were brought to the Golden Gates of the South Sea. On the 20th of August, more than eight months after sailing from Plymouth, the little fleet reached the Straits of Magellan and entered, in cold and in sickness, the dangerous passage between high, gray cliffs and snow-topped mountains. On the 6th of September the *Peli-*

can, rechristened as the world-famed *Golden Hind*, sailed into the Pacific Ocean, the first of English ships to ride the tempest-swept waters of the South Sea.

But the stress of the fight had only just begun. No sooner had the discoverers entered the confines of the new sea-realm than all the fury of a violent tempest burst over them. For six weeks they were tossed to and fro, battered and torn, swept six hundred miles out of their course. In three weeks the *Marigold* went down with all on board. A week later the *Elizabeth* became separated from the flag-ship, and Captain Wynter, losing heart, returned through the Straits the way he had come, and sailed back to England.

Drake was left alone, but unsubdued. And the storm, as if exhausted in its battle with the man of iron will, fell away and died. Again the sun shone out and fair winds smoothed the waters. Drake found himself threading the islands of Tierra del Fuego, and then on a late October day he knew that he was one of the great discoverers of the world. He stood on the southernmost point of land of the western hemisphere, and at his feet, where the dream of ages had placed a mystic *terra incognita*, the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific rolled together in one mighty ocean. With his hand he struck from the chart the *Terra Australis Incognita*.

From this moment his voyage became a tri-

umphal progress. Turning his face northward, he sailed up the coast of Chile and Peru, and as he went he made surveys of the coast. But the adventurer in him had not yet been wholly lost in the navigator and discoverer. In his veins still flowed the hot pirate blood, and now prize after prize marked his advance.

In Valparaiso harbor a rich galleon of Spain rode at anchor, heavily laden with Spanish bullion to the amount of thirty-seven thousand ducats, when suddenly the *Golden Hind* hove in sight. Never before had a strange sail been seen in these waters, and the crew of the *Grand Captain of the South* thought the new arrival was a friendly vessel. The Spaniards brought out bottles of Chile wine to drink to the newcomer's health, but they drank too deeply. Tumbled into the hatches of their own ship by the English sailors, they did not recover from their amazement before the whole treasure had been rifled.

Then on to Tarapaca. Bars of silver lay piled upon the pier. Trains of sheep from the inland came to deposit their precious loads, which a favorable wind was to carry to Panama. Instead, the rich stores went to make ballast for the pirate ships. Next came Arica, where the English buccaneers found wedges of silver as large as "brick-bats." Day by day fresh booty fell into their hands.

Reaching Callao de Lima, news was brought to

Drake that a Spanish galleon, laden with large quantities of gold and precious stones, had sailed for Panama. No time was lost. Drake flew in pursuit. The *Cacafuego* had a good fourteen days' start, but the *Golden Hind* was fleet of wing. Northward the good ship dashed under press of sail, and hour by hour as she sprang over the waves the distance shortened. For eight hundred miles the ocean race went on.

At six o'clock, on the evening of the ninth day, the treasure-ship was sighted, and the chase ended. One broadside cleared the decks of the *Cacafuego*, and in mid-ocean the ship was rifled. Chests of plate, twenty-six tons of silver, eighty pounds weight of gold, and countless jewels filled the hold of the *Golden Hind*.

Drake now thought of home. His precious cargo, he felt, must no longer be risked in mad exploits. But for him it was too tame a thing to return on his steps, and he desired no less than to "cut a furrow with his keel" around the globe. With this new enterprise in view, the first necessity was a complete refitting of the *Golden Hind*, for "twenty thousand miles of unknown water" lay before him. A month was spent in a bay in Lower California; hull, rigging, and sails were overhauled, and the whole ship thoroughly repaired.

Then straight across the Pacific, Drake took his course: past the Caroline Islands, past the

Philippines, past the Moluccas. Creeping among the maze of dangerous shoals and coral reefs in the sea of Celebes, the *Golden Hind* ran suddenly upon a hidden rock. For twenty hours she lay at the mercy of the waves, caught fast, with no hope of rescue. In despair, eight guns and three tons of cloves were thrown overboard; at the same time the wind veered suddenly to larboard, sails were hoisted, and the ship slid off the reef. This was the last and greatest danger. Soon the *Golden Hind* was clear of the Archipelago, and bounding past the Cape of Good Hope. And in two years and ten months from the day of sailing she swept into Plymouth Sound.

In England nothing had been heard of Drake for eighteen months. It was generally supposed that he had perished in the chaos of the South Sea. Rumors even of his execution by the Spaniards had reached London, and the peace party were relieved at the thought that the Queen's chief pirate would no longer endanger their relations with Spain. Then like a thunderbolt he reappeared, covered with renown and laden with fabulous riches. But he arrived to find that the Queen had disowned him, and that the Spanish ambassador was calling loudly for redress. It seemed as though his reception might be an execution rather than a triumph.

Accustomed to the vagaries of Elizabeth's moods and to the policy of the English crown,

Drake, with his customary independence, dropped anchor behind St. Nicholas Island, in Plymouth harbor, where his father had fled with him from persecution thirty years before. There he was content to wait, and before long, as he had foreseen, a messenger sped from court to summon him before the Queen. When he obeyed the summons it was not with empty hands. Drake knew Elizabeth's fondness for piracy, or rather for its plunder, and the richest of the spoils went with him as a gift to her and to her courtiers.

This was the turning-point of the scales of fortune. Beguiled by the vastness of the booty, and filled with admiration for Drake's daring exploits, the Queen loaded him with honors. He became the hero of the hour. All England rang with his praises. A cry of exultation rose throughout the land, from shore to shore, from the Lizard to the Downs.

The booty was carried to the Tower, but before registration $400,000 were extracted from the pile as Drake's share of the spoils, and Elizabeth winked at the little game. Later she added another $50,000 to his reward. The *Golden Hind* was brought up the Thames and preserved as a memorial. A public banquet was given on her deck, and the Queen, who graced the board, conferred on Drake the honor of knighthood.

But the great discoverer had not come home to be petted at court. His far-reaching mind was

devising new and deeper plans for the growth of England's supremacy at sea. He was burning to prove the hidden possibilities of the navy as a separate weapon of warfare. Having discovered the vulnerable point in Philip's armor, he spent hours in the closet of Queen Elizabeth, showing her how the power of Spain, which threatened to overwhelm the whole of Europe, might be broken by striking a heavy blow at her trade.

Five years were to pass before he could obtain his letters of marque. In the midst of treachery, plots, vacillations, and delays, his spirit fretted to be loosed once more upon the waters. Meanwhile he had work to do at home in the organization of the navy, in voting supplies as member of Parliament, and in improving the town and harbor of Plymouth in his capacity as mayor.

At last came the order to sail. Philip's seizure of English corn-ships precipitated hostilities. The fleet which Drake had collected in Plymouth Sound was the largest that had sailed under his command, and the most extensive privateering fleet on record. It numbered two men-of-war, eighteen cruisers, and a large number of store-ships and pinnaces; two thousand soldiers and sailors manned the expedition. On a day late in September, 1585, Drake ran up his colors on the *Elizabeth Bonaventura*, and the fleet stood out to sea.

Again Drake's goal was the West Indies, but with this fresh enterprise a new period in his

life was beginning to unfold itself. No longer as pirate or discoverer will he now figure: he opens his career as naval strategist and commander.

In his haste to leave harbor, Drake started short of provisions. So on his way he stopped at the Bayona Islands, and seized plunder to victual the entire fleet. Next came St. Iago on the Cape Verde Islands. The town was stormed, the island raided. From there his course lay across the Atlantic to the West Indies. San Domingo was reached soon after Christmas.

San Domingo was a walled and fortified city, the largest and most important in the Indies, and was strongly garrisoned. Its fall would have a powerful moral effect upon the whole of Europe. Drake realized this, and felt the importance of carrying the position, even though it meant a serious naval operation. He planned the attack with care. The town was taken by surprise and stormed. After a few hours of brisk fighting the Spanish troops fled across the river, and the English held possession of the Plaza. But Drake's force was not large enough to garrison the place; and, instead of attempting to hold the city, he demanded and received a ransom of $250,000. After destroying the shipping in the harbor, he moved on to the Spanish Main.

In February he sighted Cartagena, the capital of the Main, and one of the wealthiest of the

Spanish cities. Formidable defences surrounded it on all sides. A lagoon, to which only two narrow entrances gave access, protected it on the side of the sea; while a natural creek made approach from the land almost impossible. Fortified intrenchments defended all the channels; powerful forts commanded the approaches, and an attempt to storm the city seemed madness. But Drake, as usual, found a way out of the difficulty.

A detachment was ordered to wade through the surf and to come unexpectedly upon the city at a point where the enemy feared no advance, and had made no preparation for defence. At the same time a boat-attack was feigned on the side of the harbor, in order to deceive the Spaniards. The stratagem was successful. The city was taken with a rush, the garrison fled, Drake burned the shipping, and demanded a ransom of $150,000.

This feat accomplished, he next turned his eyes on the wealth of Panama. But sickness had broken out among his men, many had died, and others were stricken down every day. With his diminished force he could not hope for success. So toward the last of March he made sail for home, fully satisfied that by the capture of San Domingo and Cartagena, and the plunder of St. Iago and Vigo, he had struck a heavy moral blow to Spain from which she was not likely to recover.

CHAPTER IV

THE VICTOR OF GRAVELINES

In four months Drake reached England, and on his arrival at Plymouth promptly wrote to the government asking for further orders. He had given the world a lesson in naval warfare, and had changed the tide of European politics, and now he stood ready for further exploits. But Elizabeth was not anxious to send him on the offensive. Plots and threats of war kept England in a state of danger, and Drake was needed at home. While he chafed to be gone on some new expedition, he was not inactive at court. He strove to awaken a warlike spirit in the Queen, to show her the undreamed-of power that lay in the command of the sea, and to make her share in his projects for naval supremacy. His efforts were not futile, and events came to second them.

Philip had been making vast preparations to equip the most powerful fleet that the world had yet seen. In all the ports of Sicily, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, vessels of enormous size were built, provisions and naval stores were amassed, armies levied, arms and ammunition collected. No one

as yet knew the projected destination of Philip's gigantic Armada, but rumor whispered that it was intended for the invasion and conquest of England. Still Elizabeth disbelieved, and closed her ears to all entreaties, and her eyes to all probabilities. But at last strong proof was brought to her; a stolen paper convinced the Queen that she was destined to be Philip's victim. For a moment she was aroused, and all was feverish activity at the English court.

Drake was given the title of her Majesty's Admiral-at-the-Seas; Borough, the comptroller of the navy, was made vice-admiral. A fleet was equipped of twenty-three sail: five battle-ships, nine cruisers, and nine gunboats. Of these, four battle-ships were contributed by the Queen; the rest belonged to Drake and to the London merchants.

Drake was too familiar with the Queen's changeable moods not to hasten the preparations for departure. At the earliest possible moment he stood out to sea, with orders to sail to Cape St. Vincent, destroy the shipping, prevent concentration, intercept supplies, and disperse the Armada. Hardly had he disappeared from port, and was struggling onward through a terrific gale, which swept down upon his fleet off Finisterre, than a messenger rode post-haste to Plymouth. The Queen had veered; she sent orders to Drake which would have hampered his movements and limited his power. But

Drake had gone. Then a pinnace made chase straight into the storm, and the gale that Drake had braved put the pinnace to flight. The Queen's orders were brought back unopened, and her Admiral-at-the-Seas sailed on unmolested.

Cadiz harbor was a forest of masts. Store-ships and transports crowded the port. Splendid galleons and the most powerful galleys of Spain lay in the road. Drake determined to sail in. The entrance to the harbor was narrow and was defended by the batteries of the town and of Port St. Mary. Access to the inner harbor could be had only through the Puntal channel commanded by Port Royal. Both entrances were protected by shoals and rocks. In the face of these risks it seemed like madness to run in. So, at least, thought Vice-admiral Borough, when Drake called a council of war, and with masterful high-handedness announced his intentions. Objections were useless; Drake's policy had been neither timorous nor prudent; he did not follow accepted rules; he was an innovator.

He now headed for the harbor and sailed in between the batteries. His act of audacity filled the enemy with consternation. The Spanish vessels fled in every direction, the galleys were annihilated by the first broadside. Drake was left master of the outer harbor. The store-ships were plundered and scuttled, and the whole English fleet revictualled with corn, wine, dried fruits, and

biscuit — the provisions which had been accumulated for the great Armada.

But the work was still only half done. The inner harbor was yet to be raided. With the next day's dawn Drake entered the Puntal passage. It was but a repetition of the scene in the outer harbor. A large galleon of the Marquis of Santa Cruz was the first to fall a victim; then all the great vessels of war and many store-ships were plundered and burned. Twelve thousand tons of shipping were destroyed in twenty-six hours. With the first fair breeze Drake stood out of Cadiz bay, and in this famous exploit could boast of not having lost a single man.

By his captures Drake had learned all of Philip's plans for the Armada. Squadrons from Italy, Sicily, and Spain were to meet at Lisbon, the headquarters of the huge naval machine. At Cape St. Vincent he determined to take his stand and intercept them. But his fleet needed water, and the only anchorage along the coast for his ships was commanded by formidable works. Drake announced his intention of storming the forts. Borough remonstrated, and was made a prisoner in his own cabin. Then, at the head of a strong detachment, Drake himself led the attack on Sagres Castle. The fort crowned a steep cliff, and was considered almost inaccessible. After a gallant and desperate attempt to carry the castle by storm, faggots were piled up against the gate and

fired. In two hours the garrison surrendered, the forts were at Drake's mercy, and the anchorage free.

His next move was toward Lisbon, for he meditated no less a plan than to fall upon the Spanish admiral, Santa Cruz, and the entire Lisbon fleet. But orders from the home government forbade him from entering the harbor, and he was forced to lie outside, hoping to lure or goad the Spanish admiral into a fight in open waters. He sent taunting challenges, but all was of no avail. Santa Cruz was handicapped and could not move. He lay close-hauled in Lisbon harbor, and Drake grew tired of waiting, and put to sea.

On his way home he ran in with a great carrack from the East Indies, the *San Filipe*, a royal merchantman laden with a rich and valuable cargo. A few broadsides brought down her colors, and Drake sailed away with a million dollars' worth of plunder, and, of still greater value, the papers that told the secrets of the East India trade, the first step toward the formation of the famous East India Company.

Each time that Drake sailed jubilantly into Plymouth harbor, to lay at the feet of the Queen offerings of daring exploits and brilliant successes, and still more alluring gifts of sparkling jewels and yellow gold, Elizabeth graciously accepted the offerings, sent her apologies to Philip, disowned or reprimanded her pirate-admiral, and again settled

down to an ignominious peace. The Queen did not desire war. The Armada, it was thought, was disabled for a year to come, and for twelve more months she could rest secure in her apathy and carry on her tortuous negotiations.

Philip, meanwhile, showed surprising energy: new galleys were built, and Spanish harbors were again crowded with shipping, stores, and ammunition. Drake, too, was not inactive. Preparations for war went on as before. Rumors reached England that before the year 1587 was out the great Armada would sail from Lisbon. Then all was bustling activity again at the English court: the navy was put on a war footing, Lord Howard was appointed high admiral, Drake was given the rank of lieutenant to the lord high admiral, and the command of a squadron of thirty sail, and the whole fleet watched the horizon for the Spanish ships.

Drake's policy would have been to go in search of the Armada, before it could sail from home ports, and to scatter it over the seas. Four times he started with orders to find the enemy, and four times he was forced back to Plymouth harbor by contrary orders or contrary winds. Never was the Queen's vacillating, timorous, parsimonious policy more exasperating to the high-strung, impetuous, daring temperament of her admiral. Months passed, while Drake paced the deck of the *Revenge*, fuming at fate, and exercising his men at

target practice, although even this was regarded as an extravagant waste of ammunition by the Queen, and she gave orders that powder and supplies were to be doled out to the fleet day by day.

At last, on a day of May in 1588, the Armada put to sea. It was a gorgeous display, more fitted for a pageant than a war. In the fleet were galleys, galleons, and galleasses, all superbly decorated with streamers, standards, and gilded images. There were bands of music, and cushions and awnings, and there were magnificent chapels and state apartments. One hundred and forty vessels, carrying 20,000 soldiers, 8000 sailors, 2000 grandees, 2000 galley-slaves, formed the fleet which set sail under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

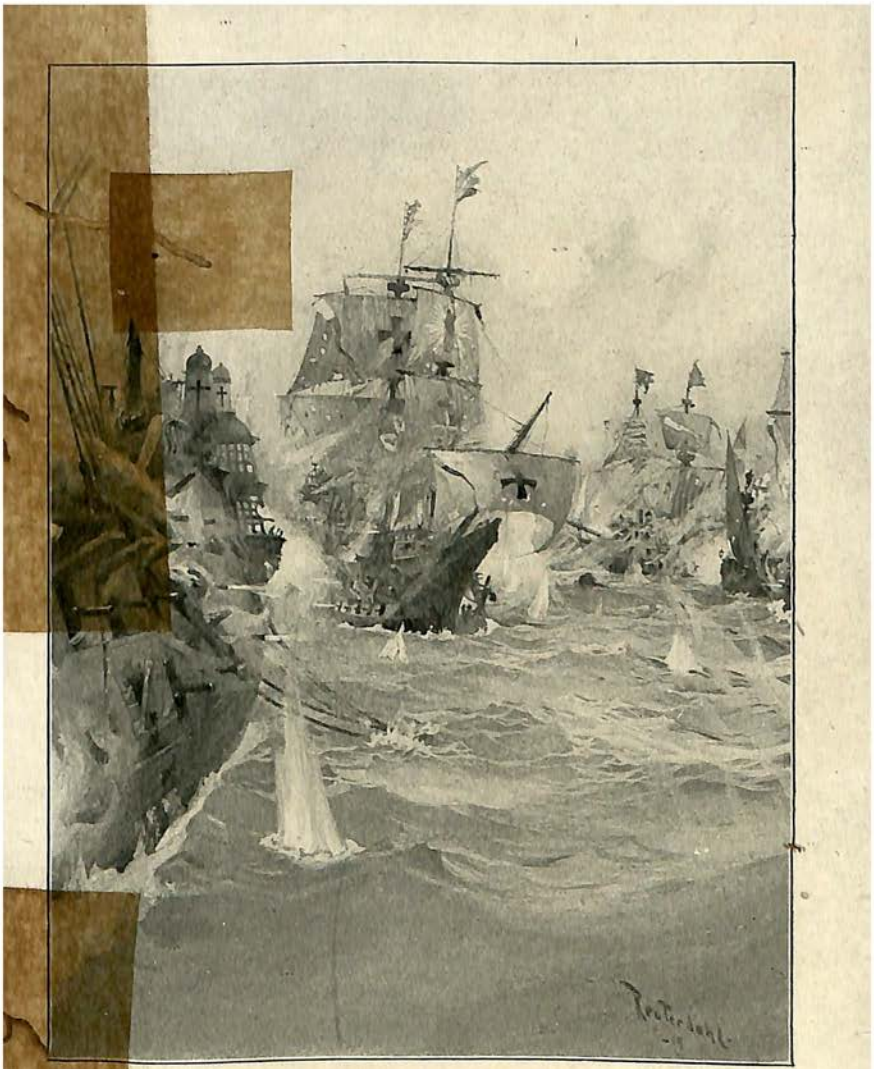
But misfortune still followed the great Armada. In the Bay of Biscay it was overtaken by a violent storm, and the unwieldy vessels scattered hither and thither; some of the smaller ones were sunk, and the others forced to seek the shelter of different ports in Spain. Finally the damages were repaired, and the fleet again set sail.

On the 29th of July the Armada was at last sighted off the Lizard on the English coast, bearing down under full sail in the form of a crescent, and stretching seven miles from horn to horn. On the same day and night ten thousand beacon fires leaped from end to end of England's shores to give warning of the enemy.

It was a solemn sight when the two fleets had their first meeting. The English ships — commanded by such masters of the waves as Howard, Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher — were light, swift, and easily managed. They could sail in and out and round and round among the unwieldy galleasses, cannonading the enemy and then escaping nimbly out of range. For days these quick frigates teased and harassed the clumsy galleons, and pelted their enormous turrets, which looked like castellated fortresses. Twice the two fleets closed yard-arm to yard-arm in hot and spirited conflict, exchanging broadside after broadside of great cannon, the English dancing off again after inflicting heavy damage. Slowly holding their course along the coast the two fleets at last dropped anchor in the narrow straits between Dover and Calais. So Spain and England lay facing each other — one hundred and thirty Spanish ships, the largest and heaviest in the world, against one hundred and fifty light English frigates. In number they were not unequal, but the Spaniards far outstripped the English in size, in artillery, and in men. Could the slender frigates cope with the mighty ships of Spain? Yet the Spaniards had one disadvantage, to which they partly owed their defeat. Their men were soldiers, not marines. They belonged to the army rather than to the navy, and fought as they would on land. It was the twilight of the ancient navy pitted against the first dawn of the modern navy.

On the next night, past midnight, as the clouds covered the moon and no eye could pierce the darkness, six vessels crept noiselessly within the Spanish line. A moment later the sea was illumined, and six moving volcanoes bore down upon the terrified enemy. They were the dreaded fire-ships, prepared and sent out by the English under cover of the night. Then a horrible panic seized the Spaniards, and spread from ship to ship like flames from sail to sail. Amid confusion and yells and unreasonable fear every cable was cut, and every vessel took to flight. When daylight dawned, the Spanish ships lay disabled and disordered off Gravelines. Soon the English fleet was astir, and bore down upon the enemy in hot pursuit. Before the day was far spent a furious and general conflict had begun, which lasted for six hours. The towering ships of the Armada became a confused mass, a helpless target for the superior gunnery of the English. Riddled, shattered, disabled, their shot exhausted, the best Spanish ships gave up the fight, and drifted with the current toward the coast of Holland. And the remnant of the great Armada fled — through storm and in hunger and sickness — to the shores of Spain, still pursued by the agile and swift-sailing English frigates. Wreck after wreck drifted on the waves, until a handful only of that vast and haughty host came wandering back to Spain.

The glory of the rout of the Invincible Armada



Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 1588.

was due to Drake: it was he who won the victory of Gravelines, and watched the flying enemy lost in the sands of the dangerous coast of Holland, or swallowed up in the blackness of a tempestuous sea. Though only vice-admiral of the fleet, it was his resolution, energy, and heroic daring that led the English fleet to the attack while Lord Howard loitered behind.

After the breaking of King Philip's power, Drake's ambition grew. It was his dream to command an armada of his own, to liberate Portugal, and set Don Antonio on the throne. The expedition failed, but it was a brilliant failure which brought the Spanish king much trouble and the English much honor.

The last act in the tragedy of Drake's life was laid among the scenes of his youth and of his early triumphs. Drawn irresistibly toward those islands in the Caribbean Sea that had witnessed his first exploits, he led his squadron to La Hacha, to Nombre de Dios, and then in a wave of the adventurous spirit of his boyhood he headed for Truxillo, the port of Honduras, and for the rich towns of Nicaragua. But a foul wind caught him and held him in the fatal Mosquito Gulf, where pestilence lurked in every breath of air.

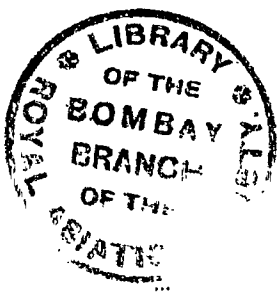
In a week's time Drake was stricken down with illness, and as the fleet sailed back to Puerto Bello, he lay in delirium on his bed. On the 28th of January, 1596, the great sea king was dead.

Few are those who are fortunate enough to pass from the scene in the hour of triumph, and at the moment of their most brilliant renown, before reverses or mistakes have come to dim the lustre of their glory. He who had fought throughout his life for his country, for fame, revenge, and power, for English supremacy at sea, was not granted the boon of dying in battle — in that battle which crushed the might of Spain and left England mistress of the waves.

A league out to sea he was given a seaman's grave, and the pirate-admiral, who in life had been the mortal foe of Spain, lay alone in those Spanish waters over which he had so often led his ships in triumph.

ADMIRAL MARTIN HARPERTZOON TROMP

1597–1653



ADMIRAL MARTIN HARPERTZOON TROMP

CHAPTER V

A GALLANT DUTCH SEAMAN

"I STRUGGLE, but I overcome." This motto and the emblem, a lion amidst the waves, adopted by the Netherlanders when they freed themselves from Spain, stand for the indomitable courage, the unyielding spirit, the love of liberty, and the heroism of the Dutch.

A race of warriors from the time when the first "Count of Holland" established himself on a bog at the mouth of the Rhine, and levied toll on every vessel that passed up and down the labyrinth of stagnant channels which surrounded his morass, they went on through long centuries warring for their freedom against men and waves. Sea fighters throughout their history, they have struggled with the ocean and on the ocean ever since they first reclaimed the innumerable islands and the wilderness of mud-banks, which became the little republic, conqueror of Spain, and one of the foremost maritime and commercial states of Europe.

Surrounded on almost every side by the North Sea and the Zuyder Zee, riddled by rivers, interlaced by the thousand streams which form the mouths of the Rhine and the Meuse, water has been at all times both Holland's friend and foe, her natural element, the source of her wealth and strength, and the chief developer of her determination, her obstinate perseverance, and her valor.

First, she conquered the sea, for the waves were ever threatening to destroy the land that the rivers had gradually built up by their deposits of alluvial mud. When the sea had been kept within bounds behind high walls and dikes, Holland next set out to make herself mistress on the waters. Her annals are crowded with the names of valiant seamen who carried her arms and her trade to the shores of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Among these names — among her Heemskerks, Heins, Tromps, De Withs, De Ruyters, Evertsens, — the greatest are those of Martin Tromp and Michael De Ruyter.

At the mouth of the Meuse, among the mud-banks and swamps and yellow streams of Holland, lies the little town of Brielle. There Martin Harpertzoon Tromp was born in 1597. His grandfather had been a coasting trader, and his father a merchant captain, and the first stories to which he listened were of fishermen and sailors, and the dangers and adventures of sea life.

Before he was nine years old, little Martin had

been to sea on his father's ship, and had seen more than one sea skirmish. In 1607 he was in the thick of a stirring battle, when a small Dutch squadron of twenty-six sail under Heemskerk attacked and destroyed the royal fleet of Spain, which lay in magnificent array off Gibraltar.

The elder Tromp, who was captain of one of the Dutch ships, had brought his ten-year-old boy with him on the expedition. In the heat of the struggle, when the vessels were linked to one another in deadly conflict, when the guns were thundering and belching cataracts of smoke, little Martin rushed up from the cabin in time to see his father fall to the deck, shot dead by a bullet from the enemy. His eyes full of tears, he threw himself passionately on his father's body, and appealed to the sailors to avenge his death.

Martin's future had been carved out for him by inheritance and events. He could be nothing other than a seaman, whether as cabin-boy or admiral. The step from one to the other was for him not a long one. He mounted his grades with marvellous rapidity. But in the years before he hoisted his admiral's flag he had many adventures that inured him to hardship, and shaped his fearless, determined character.

The rough and hard sea life early formed his soul to patience, courage and independence, honesty, simplicity, and indomitable strength. We know very little of those years of training. But

we do know that he was taken prisoner by a British corsair, on which he served as ship-boy for three years, and that afterward he was captured by Moslem pirates of the Mediterranean. And it is not difficult for us to picture to ourselves the suffering and bitterness of his life under the rod of his pirate-captors.

When he at last made his escape, and returned to his own country and to his home, the merchant marine no longer satisfied him. His aspirations drew him to a wider field of activity. In 1622 he entered the service of the States-General as lieutenant, and two years later was made captain of a frigate.

After this his rise was swift and certain. He was a hard worker, and had mastered every detail of his profession. He was both strict and affectionate with his sailors, whom he called his children, while they in turn called him "Father." He studied the condition of the navy, and planned reforms in organization and discipline which he afterward carried out. When he was promoted in 1637 to the rank of lieutenant-admiral, he possessed every quality to make a great naval commander. Natural capacity and experience had together turned out a true seaman.

On assuming chief command of the Dutch fleet, Tromp found it badly disciplined, poorly equipped, weakly armed, and insufficiently manned. In two years, unknown to Europe, quietly and doggedly,

he worked a formidable change. His fleet became well armed, faultlessly trained, and perfectly organized.

When this was accomplished it was time to try its strength, and the occasion was not long to seek. Spain, for seventy years Holland's bitterest enemy, had allied herself with the pirates of Dunkirk and was planning an invasion of the republic. At Corunna, a northern seaport town of Spain, ships were building, soldiers were gathering, and arms and provisions being amassed.

The armada was to sail northward, meet the pirates in the Bay of Biscay, and under their guidance land an army on the borders of the Meuse. Rotterdam and Amsterdam were to be overwhelmed, and the entire country subjugated. Familiar with the ins and outs of the thousand interlacing channels at the delta of the Meuse, the pirates could have easily led the Spaniards into the heart of Holland.

The powerful Spanish fleet had not as yet set sail when the Dunkirk pirates stole warily out of their harbor. Fourteen men-of-war, three frigates, and seven armed merchantmen set sail to keep their appointment in the Bay of Biscay. But Tromp had been cruising in the North Sea on the lookout for the pirate sail, and no sooner were they well out of harbor than he bore down upon them with his eleven ships.

The fight lasted for eight hours. When night

fell on the combatants, the sturdy Dutchmen had captured two of the largest pirate ships, burned a third, and forced the rest to retreat within the harbor. Then Tromp left a squadron to blockade Dunkirk, and advanced to meet the great Spanish armada which had put to sea in the beginning of September, 1639.

Off Beveziers, in the Straits of Dover, Tromp sighted the fleet of Spain, her white sail covering the water like an immense flock of sea-birds, and spreading their wings over miles of the narrow sea. The great *Mater Teresa* was there, of 2400 tons and seventy guns. Sixty-seven men-of-war, armed with 2000 guns, and manned by 2400 men, were slowly bearing down on the Dutch admiral and his twelve small ships.

Vice-admiral De With was cruising near Dover with six vessels, and a signal from his chief brought him with his squadron to aid in the unequal contest. With this minute fleet, formed in compact order, Tromp made a vigorous and sudden attack on the armada as it came drifting slowly and confidently onward. At sunrise on the morning of the 16th of September, the battle began by a broadside from Tromp, who had come to close quarters with the Spanish admiral.

For ten hours the raking fire was kept up. The Dutch vessels were small and light, and did swift and terrible work on the clumsy ships of their opponents. Don Antonio d'Oquendo, the Spanish

admiral, finding many of his ships badly damaged, retreated toward the coast of England under cover of a fog.

The Dutch followed in pursuit, and on the night of the following day, as the moon rose full and bright, they fell for the second time on the Spaniards with bewildering fury. Again the armada retreated in haste and dropped anchor in the Downs, where Admiral Pennington with eighteen British ships lay ready to protect it.

Even though the Spanish fleet had sought the shelter of British shores and British ships, Tromp did not yet despair of destroying it. Reënforced by the squadron of thirteen ships which he had left to blockade Dunkirk, he dropped anchor in the roads, and completely blockaded the Spaniards by closing both exits from the Downs. With the Goodwin Sands on one side, the English coast on the other, and a Dutch squadron at each end of the channel, D'Oquendo and his powerful fleet was held in a trap by thirty small Dutchmen.

As long as Tromp chose to lie at the mouth of the Downs, D'Oquendo was forced to wait inside. And Tromp was in no hurry. He had sent De With to the States with an urgent appeal for reënforcements, and the entire country answered his request with prompt enthusiasm and energy. The provinces voted money, raised an army, equipped ships, bought guns and powder, and in a fortnight had created a new fleet. Ship-owners

gave up their vessels, the East and West India Companies were swift and generous in their help, all the maritime towns contributed to the work. Vessel after vessel sailed for the Downs, and Tromp's fleet, from thirty sail, grew to be a hundred and ten strong.

This was the moment for which the Dutch admiral had watched and waited. He was ready to strike his blow, and to strike hard. But diplomacy was still needed in order to secure success. The first shot must come from the Spaniards, for Admiral Pennington had received orders to fight the Dutch if they began hostilities.

One day Tromp sailed tauntingly in his sloop through the Spanish lines. The Spaniards, maddened by his insolence, fired at him. His stratagem had succeeded. Returning to his fleet, at sunrise, on the morning of the 21st of October, he fired the signal for the battle to begin. The British, obliged to remain neutral, were watched by a squadron under De With. The rest of the Dutch fleet, divided into three small squadrons, attacked the Spaniards on different sides.

Confused by the new tactics, helpless in the narrow channel, bewildered by the rapidity of the attack, the clumsy Spanish galleons fell into a hopeless tangle. Many ran ashore, the great *Mater Teresa* was fired, others were sunk or captured, and eleven surrendered. Only the squadron of Dunkirk escaped with D'Oquendo on board.

On his return home Tromp was loaded with honors; he was knighted by the king of France, and later by King Charles of Great Britain; and his own country heaped upon him every mark of favor. His brilliant victory had indeed cast new lustre on the Netherlands. It had forced the respect and recognition of foreign countries, had shown Europe the strength of her navy, had established her power on the seas, and had opened a new era for the wide extension of her commerce.

CHAPTER VI

A SEA CHASE IN NORTHERN WATERS

THE chief source of the power of the Netherlands lay, in ever increasing measure, in the prosperity and constant growth of her trade. "The Dutch had made themselves the common carriers of the world." They had the monopoly of the products of Europe and the East. Their vessels shipped goods to the ports of Spain, France, Prussia, Norway, Poland, and Denmark, to England and Ireland, Brazil, Arabia, India, China, and Japan.

To strike at their commerce meant to strike at the most vital point of their national life. This was what the British did ten years after Tromp's victory in the Downs. The famous Navigation Act, which was passed by the British Parliament in 1652, was intended to destroy the vast carrying trade of the Dutch. It prohibited all foreign vessels from importing into Great Britain any products excepting those of their own country. This prohibition was clearly aimed at the enormous transport trade of the Dutch, who were practically the commercial monopolists of Europe.

The struggle for commercial supremacy which followed, and which was fostered by party spirit and national pride, completed the alienation of two peoples who by every right should have been natural allies. For almost a century the Dutch and the English had fought side by side, and their blood had mingled in a common cause. Together they had shared victory and defeat. Both nations were Protestant. Both were republics, for King Charles I had been beheaded, and Cromwell was in power in Great Britain. Thousands of Dutch refugees had fled to England from the persecutions of Philip II, and many English and Scottish soldiers served under the flag of the Netherlands. United by the closest bonds of nations, a common interest in religion, liberties, and commerce, there seemed to be every reason for preserving peace. A war between them was a war between brothers.

Yet ambition on the part of the British government, and resentment on the part of the royalist refugees in Holland and the Orange party which supported them, brought about an unnatural and ruinous war, but one that developed the naval ability and prowess of both countries.

While anger and opposition were still smouldering among both peoples, ready to burst out on the first provocation, two parliamentary ambassadors, Lord St. John and Sir Walter Strickland, were sent to the Hague by the British Commonwealth for the purpose of arranging an alliance with the

States. Accompanied by a large and brilliant suite, they were driven from Rotterdam, where they had landed, to the Hague in a procession of twenty-five carriages, flanked by liveried footmen. They made their entry amid a crowd of Dutch citizens, who had gathered from all parts to see the magnificent pomp of the British embassy. Dinners and receptions were followed by a solemn audience before the Great Assembly, at which St. John appeared in a suit of black velvet, a mantle lined with cloth of gold, and wearing a hat-band of sparkling diamonds.

But while the reception by the Dutch government was friendly and flattering, a different welcome was given to the ambassadors by a large part of the populace, who favored the Stuarts and the Orange party. Cries of "regicides," "executioners," and "king's murderers" greeted St. John and Strickland whenever they appeared on the streets — insults which St. John remembered and revenged on his return to England.

Added to the animosity of the mob was the disinclination of the States-General to accept the political union proposed by the Commonwealth. The ambassadors returned to England without having accomplished their purpose, and St. John from vindictive motives encouraged the passing of the Navigation Act as the surest way of destroying the chief source of Holland's wealth.

Other disputes, beside those growing out of

commercial rivalry, added to the gradual increase of hostile feeling between the two nations. Of these, one affected the enormous fishing interests of the Dutch, and the other their sense of national power and pride. The Commonwealth required Dutch fishermen to obtain licenses to fish in British waters, and also insisted with new stringency on the striking of the flag in the presence of the British colors, in acknowledgment of England's ancient claim to the sovereignty of the narrow seas. On both of these points the Dutch were determined to resist.

The storm clouds of war which had been fast gathering burst into open hostilities toward the middle of May, 1652, the immediate cause of the rupture being the dispute of the flag.

Admiral Tromp, who at the head of a fleet of fifty ships had been cruising near Dunkirk in Flemish waters, was forced by a fierce storm to seek the shelter of the English coast, and took refuge under lee of Dover Castle. On one side, in the Downs, lay Major Bourne with eight men-of-war; to the west, in the Channel, Blake was cruising with a squadron of fifteen ships.

For a day and a half Tromp rode in the calm waters under Dover cliff without saluting the flag of the castle. On the 19th of May, Blake suddenly hove in sight and fired a signal, which meant "strike." Still the Dutch admiral's flag flew proudly from his masthead. The haughty de-

mand, answered by the even more haughty refusal, could have but one ending. Both admirals meant to fight.

A broadside opened the battle. Tromp, fighting merely for the honor of his flag, assumed the defensive, for war had not as yet been formally declared between the two countries, and not until Blake had been reënforced by the squadron of Major Bourne did he hoist his red flag as the signal for a general engagement. Then the fight became warm and vigorous. When evening closed, no decisive victory had been won by either side, but Tromp had gained his point by not saluting the British flag. On the following morning, having kept his position all through the night, he drifted toward the French coast.

War had now begun, and all the efforts of the Dutch government could not arrest it. The Hollanders, still smarting under the sting of British arrogance, were filled with a deep and resistless desire for revenge. Fearing a revolution, unless active and prompt war measures were taken, the Dutch government sent Tromp to sea, with instructions to "attack the British fleet and fight to the bitter end."

Since the first battle had been fought, rapid preparations for war had been in progress in the Netherlands, and when Tromp hoisted his flag early in July, 1652, he had under his command ninety-six ships of war and several fire-ships. But

we must remember that the Netherlands had always been chiefly a trading nation. Their regular navy was limited, and counted only a small number of lightly armed vessels, whose principal service was to act as escort to the great fleets of merchantmen and fishing bosses. To these were added, in serious emergencies, a large number of hired merchantmen armed with only six or eight guns.

The Dutch navy was in fact almost a hundred years behind the British navy, which since the time of Drake had been steadily developing in the strength, size, and equipment of its vessels. To offset this inequality, Tromp's genius was greater perhaps than that of his rival, and his seamen were the best and most skilful of the age.

Such was the condition of naval affairs when Tromp slipped anchor and headed for the Downs in search of Blake. The British admiral had sailed northward to attack the Dutch herring boats, and had left Vice-admiral Sir George Ayscue with a squadron of fifteen men-of-war in the Downs. Tromp remembered his successful attack and complete rout of the Spanish fleet when it lay between the coast and the Goodwin Sands, and he decided to try the same stratagem on Ayscue.

Dividing his fleet into three squadrons, he closed the outlets of the Downs. But the winds were against him. After several days spent in

tacking and manœuvring and struggling against head winds and calms, he concluded to give up this smaller prey, and to sail in search of Blake.

The British admiral, some weeks before, had gone into the northern waters. On the coast of Scotland the Dutch fishing fleet of six hundred herring smacks was starting on its homebound voyage, when Blake with fifty ships of war plunged into its midst. A fierce struggle followed, in which Blake sunk several of the Dutch convoy ships, captured the rest, and destroyed many of the fishing boats. Then he headed for the Orkneys to intercept the rich East India fleet of merchantmen, laden with stores for the home trade.

But into the northern Scottish seas Tromp was flying under press of sail in pursuit of the British fleet. The Dutch admiral was several days behind his enemy, but hour after hour he struggled on, sometimes with light winds, sometimes with no winds at all. He did not know where Blake was, but he was determined to find him. For fourteen days the sea chase went on. Every hour brought Tromp closer to his foe. Then on the afternoon of the 5th of August the whole of the British fleet was suddenly descried by the Dutch lookouts.

At last the rivals were face to face, and Tromp's blood warmed within him at the coming struggle. But it was decreed that the battle should not take

place. A fierce northwesterly gale had been blowing for several hours. Gradually it grew into a hurricane, and the icy blasts lifted the waters of these distant seas into angry, lashing waves which smote the fleets with fury. Sea and wind, wind and sea, tore and shattered the ships of the Netherlands, and drove them before the tempest out on to the unfriendly ocean.

The full force of the terrific gale had fallen on Tromp. Many of his vessels were rent into pieces on the rocks of the Shetlands; others fell into the hands of Blake who had taken refuge among the islands. Discouraged and disheartened, Tromp sailed back to the Texel with only forty disabled wrecks, out of the ninety-six ships which had put to sea in July.

Censure and disgrace, accusations of treachery and mismanagement, met the old hero on his return to Holland. Had not the most powerful fleet of the republic been intrusted to the care of their admiral, and had he not brought it back a stupendous wreck? Had not the lives of six thousand men been thrown away, and was not every sea town of the Netherlands smitten with sorrow and ruin? An official investigation was instituted, and Tromp, deprived of his command, spent three months in inaction and dishonor.

While its admiral had been sailing the Scottish seas, the Dutch government had not been idle. It had collected and equipped a second fleet of thirty

ships, the command of which was given to Michael De Ruyter. During Tromp's short disgrace, De Ruyter won a brilliant victory off Plymouth over a British fleet of forty large and well-armed men-of-war under Ayscue. But this success for the arms of the republic was offset by the discomfiture of De With, who had temporarily succeeded Tromp in his high command.

De With, nicknamed the "bellicose," fiery and impetuous by nature, always plunging into the thickest of the fight, with the red war flag run to his masthead, struggled bravely against wind, storm, and treachery. But after a splendid and dashing attack, and a short-range battle which lasted the whole of one day, he was forced to retreat to the shelter of the home coast.

CHAPTER VII

SWEEPING THE NARROW SEAS

By the beginning of November, 1652, a month after the return of De With, the reputation of Tromp had been cleared and he was reinstated in the confidence of the government. Restored to the head of the fleet, which numbered ninety ships of war, eight galliots, and eight fire-ships, he put to sea on the 1st of December.

An immense outbound merchant fleet of five hundred ships lay at the mouth of the Meuse awaiting his protecting escort on their voyage westward through the Channel. But news came that Blake was off the Downs, and Tromp ordered the merchantmen and part of his fleet to put back, while he sailed in pursuit of Britain's admiral. On the 9th of December he sighted the British fleet off the Goodwin Sands.

Blake started for the open sea, and Tromp sailed full speed after him, with the blue flag for general pursuit flying from his masthead. After a chase of thirty-six hours the lighter Dutch vessels overtook the British near Dungeness Head, off Dover. Blake was forced to accept battle, and after the

first volley between the rival flag-ships had been exchanged a terrific cannonading set in.

Tromp in the *Brederode* was enveloped in a cloud of thick smoke. On one side the *Garland*, on the other side the *Adventure* of forty guns, kept up an obstinate fight, while Vice-admiral Evertsen came to the assistance of his chief alongside the *Adventure*. After an hour the British crews surrendered, and the Orange flag was nailed to the mast. By the close of the day, Blake, completely defeated, ran for shelter under lee of Dover Castle, and later retreated to the Thames. On the following morning Tromp proposed to sail up the Thames, but lack of pilots and the difficulty of the navigation prevented the execution of the daring scheme.

Tromp was master of the narrow sea. He had swept the Channel of his foes, and for ten weeks he scoured the waters from east to west. No British fleet could leave the shelter of its harbor. According to British writers, Tromp mounted a broom at his masthead as a token that he had cleared the seas of his enemies, and as he rode the Channel through the stormy winter months his broom rode with him for a challenge. But none disputed his sovereignty.

Tromp's great victory was the signal to Dutch privateers. Over a hundred letters of marque were issued within a week, and every sea town was restless with activity. Rich spoils were brought

in; hundreds of British trading coasters and fishing boats were captured, and extensive injury done to British commerce.

In the flush of success, and divided by political dissensions at home, the Dutch committed their great blunder. During the long winter months, while their admiral was cruising in the Channel and keeping the British in check, he was left without reënforcements, without fresh supplies of food or ammunition. In the meanwhile Great Britain had been active in building and equipping a new and powerful fleet. And Tromp, short of provisions, of powder, and of shot, was obliged to struggle against the new, well-stored ships, and the fresh crews of his enemies.

Toward the close of February he was convoying on their homebound voyage a fleet of a hundred and fifty merchantmen. A square of four Dutch squadrons enclosed the richly laden ships from the East, two hundred and twenty vessels in all, a crowd of masts and rigging covering the waters to the horizon. Blake and Deane in command of their new fleet, and Monk with his squadron, lay in waiting off Portland.

Tromp called his captains on board the flag-ship, held a council of war, and planned the attack; then he made the signal to prepare for battle. With silent guns the Dutch fleet advanced upon the British line under a brisk cannonading, and not until the *Brederode* was within musket range

of the British admiral's ship did Tromp speak. His message was a broadside poured into the *Triumph*. Then he doubled on himself and, returning, discharged a second broadside, and wheeling once again he poured a third broadside into the *Triumph's* other side.

The battle had started with fury, and, from eight o'clock on the morning of the 28th until darkness fell, the combatants fought heroically and desperately. In twos and threes and fours the vessels lay together in deadly conflict. When night separated the enemies, the Dutch had not lost a ship, the merchant fleet was safe, and the long half-moon line of battle was still unbroken. The night was spent in repairing damages.

On the following morning, still drifting northward, the rival fleets again began the fight, six leagues off Dungeness. Tromp had won a free road to the coast of Holland, and the merchant fleet, protected by the great half-circle of battleships, was slowly gaining on its homeward run. Tromp now kept on the defensive. His ammunition was running low, and his sole object was to carry his charge to a safe haven. Time after time Blake tried to break through the solid line, and time after time he failed. The second night fell, and still the Dutch were drifting home. But the damage had been fearful. Rigging had been demolished, hulls riddled with shot, and many of the ships were scarcely able to keep afloat.

When the morning of the 2d of March dawned the enemies were off Beveziers, and the attack began for the third and last time. Charge and resistance went on with gallant courage and endurance on both sides, until finally at the last attack only thirty of Tromp's ships could return. But even at the last hour, when hardly a shot was left, and every vessel was disabled, the Dutch line was kept unbroken. At five o'clock in the afternoon Blake ceased firing and gave up the pursuit.

Three days later Tromp sailed into the Meuse. Nine of his men-of-war had been burnt or captured, some of the merchant vessels were missing, and the rest of his fleet was almost completely shattered; but he had brought a hundred and twenty-five of the merchantmen to safe anchorage, and if the great three-days' battle was a defeat, it was a glorious defeat — one that brought out Tromp's superb heroism, his power of organization, knowledge of tactics, judgment, and cool courage. His country acknowledged his heroism, and the States-General presented him with a special gift.

But a series of defeats followed in the train of Tromp's magnificent retreat. The chief causes of these reverses lay back of the navy. The government was short of money, and this lack showed itself in a want of men, provisions, ammunition — everything that went to make a well-equipped fleet. These defeats were made less humiliating

by the genius of its grand leader, but the skill of one man could not win battles without tools.

The British navy had the advantage of well-built ships, and the press-gang to replenish its crews; it had also the advantage of a rich, prosperous, united nation at its back. It was unhampered in its movements; it had no large merchant armadas to protect on their perilous outbound and homebound voyages. With such advantages it gained, step by step and inevitably, those victories which the Dutch disputed with unconquerable spirit and heroism.

By the middle of May a British fleet was sailing in the Texel, harassing and alarming the coast of Holland and Zealand, and capturing Dutch trading vessels that ventured too far out to sea. Tromp in the meanwhile had sailed to the northern seas with a hundred ships, convoying the outgoing merchant fleet on its roundabout voyage to Spain and the East. In the Scottish waters he waited for the heavily laden, incoming merchantmen, and escorted them on their homeward way. But news reached him that Monk and Deane at the head of a powerful fleet of a hundred and five sail, and Blake with a squadron of twenty ships, were looking for him near the Texel.

The two great fleets sighted each other off Nieuport on the Flemish coast, on a day early in June. The fight opened before Blake had joined the main fleet, but on both sides figured some of the

foremost seamen of the day. Among the Dutch were Tromp, De Ruyter, De With, and Evertsen, the greatest of Holland's sea fighters; among the British were Monk, Deane, Penn, and Lawson.

The heavy-calibred British men-of-war bore down upon the Dutch in a solid half-moon battle front, and slowly but persistently forced them to retire. The wind was against Tromp and prevented him from coming to a short-range distance and boarding the enemy's ships— his only chance of success. With unflagging determination on one side, and stubborn resistance on the other, the battle was waged from morning until after darkness had enveloped the opposing fleets. Not until nine o'clock did the firing cease.

On the following morning Blake plunged suddenly into the heart of the fight to reënforce the British line, and at the same moment the Dutch made the terrible discovery that they had scarcely any ammunition left. Tromp was determined to die hard. Placing all his hope in a last daring effort, he manœuvred skilfully so as to get the weather-gage, and ran the *Brederode* alongside Penn's vice-admiral, poured broadside after broadside into him, and carried his quarter-deck. But his men were repulsed, and after a terrific struggle the British succeeded in boarding the *Brederode*.

Tromp was resolved not to be taken alive. He ordered two barrels of gunpowder to be placed on the upper deck and set on fire. With a fearful

explosion the whole of the upper part of the ship was blown up, destroying Penn's men along with it, and the shattered and burning fragments of spars and deck fell on all sides into the water. The sudden catastrophe threw both fleets into confusion. By a wonderful chance Tromp escaped with his life; and seeing that the day was completely lost, that not a shot was left, and that the greater part of his vessels were either captured or disabled, he ordered a retreat to the coast of Zealand, where he took refuge behind the sand-banks of the Wielingen.

This signal defeat was fatal to Dutch shipping interests. Every port on the coast of Holland and Zealand was completely blockaded. Commerce was stopped. Not a fishing smack or merchant vessel could stir out of harbor. And this at the height of the trade season.

The high-mighty lords at the Hague at last awoke to the gravity of the situation, and listened to the oft-repeated and indignant protests of their admirals, who were forced to bear the brunt and suffer the results of the government's negligence. Heavier ships, heavier guns, more men, more powder — these were the constant demands. "There are more than fifty ships in the English fleet, the least of which is better than the best Dutch ship" — this was what Tromp told the States-General.

But if any improvement was to be the result of these strong appeals and remonstrances, Tromp

was not destined to reap the benefit of it. There was no time to finish the sixty great ships of war which the States-General had at last ordered to be built. The British were blockading the coast, and Blake carried a broom at his masthead in the very face of Holland.

With incredible speed a new fleet was collected. It was composed of the same old material, small merchant ships bought from trading companies, from private merchants, and even from foreign countries; the crews were raw and untrained. Within a few weeks of his last defeat, Tromp ran out of the Meuse at the head of a fleet of ninety vessels, to fight the last battle of the war and the last of his life. His old and feeble mother had come on board to bid him farewell, and turning to the sailors she begged them to stand by her son to the last. Answering with a ringing cheer, they declared that they would never surrender to the enemy.

Sailing out of the Wielings on the 4th of August, 1653, Tromp turned northward in search of Monk's fleet, which for more than six weeks had been threatening the coast. In four days he sighted the British admiral off the Texel. Behind the Texel lay Vice-admiral De With, with twenty-seven ships under his command, waiting to run out and join his chief, but now effectually blockaded by the enemy.

Tromp at once turned seaward in feigned retreat,

and luring Monk after him, kept up a continual fire at long range. The cannonading lasted all day with little damage to either fleet, but Tromp's stratagem had succeeded. Monk was deceived and drawn out to sea; De With slipped out of the Texel during the night, and on the following afternoon brought his squadron into action.

On the morning of Sunday, the 10th of August, the battle began at close quarters. Monk had ordered his fleet to neither give nor take quarter. The collision was fearful. Early in the day, while Tromp was giving orders and watching through a hand telescope the movements of the different squadrons, a musket ball pierced him to the heart. As he fell to the deck he cried to his men, "Be of good courage!" and died almost at once.

The death of their great admiral was kept a secret to all but a few, and his flag flew from his masthead throughout the battle. With gallant courage the Dutch disputed every inch of the seaway back to the Texel, and together the fleets drifted toward the coast. Crowds of spectators watched the stubborn struggle from the sand downs of Holland.

In the early afternoon twenty-four of the Dutch ships turned traitors and retreated. Almost every battle of late had seen cowards and traitors deserting their commanders and spreading sail for home. They were usually Zealanders. Political distrust and dissensions, combined with the jeal-

ousy of the different admiralties of the States, produced disunion and rivalry in the navy.

De With was left with only thirty ships, and the battle, which had begun at half-past six in the morning, and had been raging for more than eight hours, finally ended in his retreat to the Texel. The British had gained the victory, but the Dutch had broken the blockade. Monk retired to the Thames, and several months later peace was concluded. The advantage to the Dutch had been dearly bought by the death of their noble commander.

On Tromp's magnificent tomb, raised by the States-General at Delft, were inscribed the words: "He left to posterity a grand example of mastery in naval warfare, of fidelity to the State, of prudence, of courage, of intrepidity, and of immovable firmness."

ADMIRAL MICHAEL ADRIAANS-ZOON DE RUYTER

1607–1676

ADMIRAL MICHAEL ADRIAANSZOON DE RUYTER

CHAPTER VIII

HOLLAND'S FAMOUS SEA KING

No one has better represented the sea-power of the United Netherlands than De Ruyter — the greatest and most renowned of her admirals, the chief of her valiant sea fighters. No one has more gloriously maintained on high or narrow seas the honor of the Dutch flag, or shed more lustre on the Dutch navy. Carrying the work of his predecessor, Martin Tromp, to its fullest completion, he won for his country during a short but brilliant period that naval supremacy which has at all times been the aim of every maritime nation.

Beside being the chief representative of Dutch seamen, De Ruyter was also the embodiment of the national Dutch character. He was one of the few almost perfect examples that history records of republican simplicity of mind, unassailable integrity, truth, and disinterestedness. He was

the type of an ideal democrat. A hero without petty weaknesses, without personal ambition or self-interest, without vanity, and incapable of meanness, he devoted his life with singleness of zeal and purpose to a country not always grateful, but one that held his unchanging love and ardent patriotism.

Born under a republic, he was in every way a self-made and a self-educated man. By his wisdom, intrepid courage, natural ability, and self-taught skill he rose from the rank and file to the highest naval command in his country. The foremost seaman of his century, he owed everything to merit and to his individual efforts. He was the moulder of his own career.

Michael Adriaanszoon de Ruyter was born in 1607, in the busy seaport town of Flushing, a centre of trade and shipping interests. In the harbor of the little Zealand town, behind the sand-banks of Walcherin, at one of the mouths of the river Scheldt, the rich merchant fleets from the Baltic and the Indies came to anchor and to unload their cargoes. A forest of masts covered the water, and on the quay all was stir and activity.

This was De Ruyter's first playground. His taste for the sea came to him by natural affinity rather than by inheritance. His parents were plain working people, his father being a brewer's journeyman. Little Michael, when only ten years old, was placed in a rope-walk where he earned a

penny a day. But so dull and tedious a life was little suited to the active, danger-loving temperament of the future admiral. His turbulent ways and love of adventure exasperated his father and filled the steady inhabitants of Flushing with dismay. There seemed to be no outlet on land for his energies, and as a last resource his father sent him to sea at the age of eleven as ship-boy to a boatswain's mate. From that moment his life was as varied as he could desire.

The change to a profession that he loved, and that suited his natural tastes, seemed to act as a steadying influence. His character became from that moment more settled and reliable, and developed rapidly, so that we find him early filling positions of trust and responsibility. When he was fifteen he was promoted to the rank of gunner, and distinguished himself for his coolness and daring. In an encounter between his ship and a Spanish privateer, while he was still a common sailor, he was the first to board the enemy's vessel, and was wounded and taken prisoner. On reaching land he made his escape, and tramped across Europe, from Spain to Zealand, begging his bread as he went. He reached Flushing weak, ragged, and starving.

His reputation for audacity and intelligence soon brought him a new position. He was made pilot on a merchantman when he was twenty-two, and ten years later was captain of his own vessel. His

advance from ship-boy, through the various grades of boatswain, mate, to captain, had been slow and gradual. But these years were rich in experience. He had learned, step by step, the sailor's profession. And this knowledge, won at first hand, was a tremendous source of power to him in after years. It gave him the ability, when he was called to guide the destiny of the Dutch navy, to command and direct his followers, from the captain to the seaman aloft, in the minutest details of their service.

Stories of his practical maritime knowledge, his wide experience in navigation, and his capacity as a commander at last reached the ears of the government. In 1641 he received his commission as captain, and was later made rear-admiral of the fleet sent by the Netherlands to the assistance of the Portuguese against the Spaniards.

Although his destiny was, in later years, to lead him constantly into the very heat of battle, and he was to fight for his country in fifty-five engagements, he had a natural aversion for war and bloodshed. After the close of the Portuguese campaign, he went back to the merchant marine and carried on independent trading. It was on one of his return voyages from Irish ports, when he was bringing home a large and valuable cargo of butter, that he played his notorious trick on a Dunkirk pirate.

A fierce November storm was raging in the Channel, and he had anchored near the Isle of Wight

to wait for favorable winds and calmer waters. The pirate craft were swarming in the narrow sea, ready to dart upon any small and lightly armed trader that happened to come in sight. The gale still continued, but De Ruyter was impatient, and slipping out of harbor, thought to venture a home run to Zealand in defiance of storms and buccaneers.

Scarcely had he left shelter when he saw a Dunkirker bearing down on him full sail, and at a speed that made escape impossible. Capture and the loss of his cargo seemed certain. But here his ingenuity came to his aid. Ordering his sailors to bring up several barrels of butter, he had the deck and every rope and spar greased and smeared. This done he waited calmly for the approach of the corsair ship, and offered no resistance as the pirates came to close quarters and impetuously started to board the undefended merchantman.

Great was their amazement to find themselves reeling and staggering as soon as their feet touched the trader's deck. Not a man could keep his footing. They stumbled and fell prostrate in every direction. Seized with superstitious fear, the terrified pirates fled precipitately from the bewitched ship, and left De Ruyter to sail peacefully homeward with his rich cargo packed safely away in the hold.

Until he was forty-five, De Ruyter continued as a successful trader. He amassed a large fortune,

built a house in Amsterdam, and was in every way a respectable, highly esteemed burgher. Having satisfied his love of adventure, he decided to retire from business, and to live a quiet, domestic life, cultivating his garden and enjoying a restful middle age. For one year he fulfilled his dream, little thinking what a life of strenuous exertion and heavy responsibility still lay before him.

In 1652 the first war with Great Britain broke out. Although De Ruyter had not been trained for the navy, Grand-pensionary De Witt, the chief executive of the Netherlands, was not ignorant of the ability and skill of the former trader. An order from the Hague called him to the seat of government to receive his commission as rear-admiral of the second fleet, under the chief command of Lieutenant-admiral Tromp.

De Ruyter did not long hesitate. His country needed his services. From that moment he resigned all claim upon his own life, and devoted himself until his death to the faithful fulfilment of his duty to the state. Sacrificing with simple heroism and manliness his personal desires and tastes, he thenceforth knew no other incentive and inspiration to high resolve and glorious achievement than love of his God and his country.

Given the command of a squadron during Tromp's temporary disgrace, he gained a brilliant victory over Sir George Ayscue, near Plymouth. The Dutch rear-admiral, with only thirty ships of war

and six fire-ships, was escorting a fleet of sixty merchantmen through the Channel, keeping close to the shores of Sussex. The greater number of his ships were small and armed with less than thirty guns, the heaviest among them carrying only forty.

Hampered by the merchantmen, De Ruyter met, on the 26th of August, the British fleet of forty ships and five fire-ships under the command of Ayscue. Twelve of the enemy's ships were large and carried sixty guns. After a sharp engagement, which lasted many hours against heavy odds, De Ruyter carried the day and forced Ayscue to retreat to Plymouth Sound. All through the night the Dutch admiral kept his position, hoping to renew the fight on the following day; but when morning dawned, the British vessels were nowhere to be seen.

During the rest of the war with Great Britain, and until peace was concluded, De Ruyter, at the head of the squadron of Zealand, took part in almost every engagement off the English and Dutch coasts, both under Vice-admiral De With and under Tromp. After the death of Tromp he was appointed vice-admiral of Holland, second only in command to Lieutenant-admiral Obdam van Wassenar, who had succeeded to the highest position in the navy.

Quiet having been restored to the northern waters, De Ruyter was sent with his squadron to

the Mediterranean to protect Dutch trade against the depredations of the Algerine pirates. The commerce of Holland, after the ravages it had suffered during the late war, needed every defence and protection of its interests. Sailing to the Barbary states, on the coast of Africa, De Ruyter spread terror along the shores of Algeria, overran Morocco, threatened Tunis, and captured many pirate vessels on the way. But the Barbary Corsairs were not the only sea wolves that threatened the security of Dutch navigation. For years past French privateers had been making reprisals on the merchant ships of the United Provinces, and had seized more than three hundred Dutch trading vessels. France had leagued herself with Great Britain to ruin the commerce of Holland, and had let loose her pirate-privateers on her rival in trade.

While sweeping the Mediterranean of Moorish galleots, De Ruyter sighted two French privateers off Corsica. They were commanded by the notorious pirate De la Lande, who had more than once looted Dutch ships of their rich cargoes. As soon as he descried the French flag of the privateers, De Ruyter gave hot chase. Hours passed, and still the exciting pursuit went on, the Dutch plying their cannon on the fugitives. The swift-sailing vessels of the Hollanders gained little by little on the privateers, and the distance gradually shortened between them. At last the Frenchmen were

boarded, and then carried to Barcelona, where the ships were sold, and the crews landed on Spanish soil.

Bursting with rage, Cardinal Mazarin sent vehement protestations to the Dutch government. An ambassador was despatched to the Hague demanding instant reparation for the conduct of De Ruyter, and restoration of the captured ships. For all answer, the States presented their energetic admiral with a magnificent gift and congratulated him on his prompt action.

In 1658 war broke out between Sweden and Denmark, and the Dutch found themselves involved in protecting the interests of the Danes in the Baltic, and helping them to defend their shores against the encroachments of their northern neighbors. A fleet of thirty-seven war-ships, under Admiral Obdam, was sent to raise the siege of Copenhagen, and to blockade the Swedish fleet in the harbor of Landscroon. The successes of the Dutch fired the British to prepare an armament to assist the king of Sweden against the allies, but Britain's new move only served as a fresh incentive to the government at the Hague.

Through the cold winter months, when the ground was covered with ice, and hostilities were suspended, the dockyards of Holland were teeming with activity. New ships were built on improved models, crews were carefully picked and trained, and by the 20th of May, 1659, a small but well-

equipped fleet of forty ships of war and a land army of four thousand men sailed out of the Meuse and headed for the Baltic.

Admiral Obdam had retired, and De Ruyter was appointed commander-in-chief, with full power to act with vigor. Several months, the best of the summer, were lost in attempted negotiations, and the autumn had set in before hostilities recommenced. It was not until the early days of November that De Ruyter finally sailed to Funen, an island off Denmark which had fallen into the hands of Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden. Intrenched within the strongly fortified city of Nybourg, one of the foremost fortresses of northern Europe and considered almost impregnable, the Swedes were confident of holding their position. The Danish-Dutch allies, equally determined to carry this stronghold, brought stratagem to the aid of force.

At the head of a fleet that had been increased to seventy-five war-ships, De Ruyter appeared before Nybourg, and under cover of the night sent out a large number of boats, each carrying only a few men, to feign an attempt at landing. Entirely misled by this ruse, the Swedes collected their whole army at the threatened point. De Ruyter then slipped quietly away, and sailed thirty miles up the coast to Kartemunde, a small and poorly garrisoned town. A brisk cannonading, a swift attack in the boats, and a landing under heavy

fire forced the Swedish soldiers back into the town. After a few hours' bombardment the town itself was abandoned, and the troops retreated in confusion.

The entire Danish-Dutch army was then landed and began the cross-country march to Nybourg, while the fleet sailed back to blockade the harbor. On the side toward the land, Nybourg was defended by a well-fortified eminence. There the Swedish troops, renowned for their bravery since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, took up their position. Again and again the Danish-Dutch troops attacked the Swedes, intrenched behind their earthworks; time after time the allies were forced to retreat. But after many hours of obstinate fighting, and mainly through the valor and ability of the Dutch, the besieged were finally driven back, in hopeless confusion, within the gates.

At the same time De Ruyter's fleet, which had been stationed so as to surround the city on three sides, opened a heavy and destructive fire. The terrified people and the panic-stricken soldiers tried in vain to defend themselves against the incessant cannonading; they were soon forced to make unconditional surrender of the city.

This signal victory, the blockade by De Ruyter of the Swedish fleet in the harbor of Landscroon, and the submission of Funen to the Danes, ended the war, and a treaty was soon afterward concluded between Denmark and Sweden. The

grateful king of Denmark, as a recognition of De Ruyter's services, raised him to the peerage, and the Dutch admiral, who had been the means of establishing peace in northern waters, returned to his home in Holland, hoping to enjoy a short period of rest at his own fireside.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIUMPH OF THE DUTCH NAVY

PEACE did not last long, and four years after the close of the Danish campaign Holland found herself again involved in a war with Great Britain. De Ruyter was destined to lead his fleets through a long succession of brilliant engagements, which raised the Dutch navy to the highest pinnacle of glory and renown, only to end at his death in its almost total eclipse.

Rivalry in trade was once more the cause of rupture. For the past ten years anger and resentment had been fostered and nourished among both peoples. Injuries committed by both nations to the merchants and the commeree of their rival ended in a series of reprisals which increased ill feeling, and hastened open hostilities. It was chiefly through the English and Dutch West India Companies that these harassing reprisals were carried on.

Along the coast of Africa the Dutch had established a number of successful trading centres and factories. A British squadron under Sir Robert Holmes was despatched by the West India Com-

pany on a privateering expedition to the coast of Guinea, and the unprotected Dutch settlements fell an easy prey to this unexpected assault. The British captured a number of ships, stormed several Dutch forts, reduced two strongholds on the island of Goree, and carried the fort of Cape Corse.

Sir Robert Holmes then sailed to North America, where the Dutch had long been established in their colony of New Netherlands, and appeared suddenly before New Amsterdam, the capital of the settlement. Poorly fortified and wholly unprepared for the attack, the city immediately surrendered, and the British easily took possession of the entire colony. The territory was granted to the Duke of York, who was director-in-chief of the English West India Company, and the name of the county and city was changed to New York. Thus, with scarcely a blow, the British completed their conquest of the entire American seaboard, and effected a momentous change in American history.

After a futile attempt to ward off hostilities, and conciliate the king of Great Britain, the Dutch took active measures to protect their commerce. De Ruyter, who was cruising with his fleet in the Mediterranean, holding the Moorish pirates in check, received secret instructions to sail for the coast of Africa and recapture the forts that had fallen into the hands of the British. After several weeks spent in taking in water and provisions,

and in eluding the British admiral, Lawson, who was also sailing up and down the narrow sea and keeping a watchful eye upon the fleet of the Netherlands, De Ruyter at last succeeded in slipping away unnoticed and heading for the Cape of Good Hope.

The island of Goree, the forts of Cape Verd, Orange, and Nassau, Tokorari and St. George, were retaken. The strongly fortified and almost inaccessible fort of Coromantyn was stormed and carried, and many British merchantmen with their rich cargoes fell into the hands of the Dutch.

Open rupture with Great Britain was now inevitable. The British government had in fact been active in its preparations for war. Vigorous measures were taken to equip a powerful fleet, which was placed under the command of the Duke of York, and the official declaration of war was hastened by the capture of a hundred and thirty Dutch merchantmen laden with French produce.

The Netherlands, entirely isolated in their political relations, left to rely wholly upon their own resources against an opponent vastly their superior in strength, strained every sinew of their republic to make ready for the coming struggle. Their preparations were swift and vigorous.

The fisheries were interrupted, all the whale and herring smacks were reserved for use in the navy, the East India Company provided twenty men-of-war at their own cost, letters of marque were

granted, a heavy subsidy was voted by the States-General, towns on the seaboard were fortified, and the equipment of the fleet was carried on with speed and activity. Early in March, 1665, when the formal declaration of war, sent by the king of Great Britain, arrived at the Hague, a hundred and three war vessels, and over sixty smaller craft and fire-ships, lay within the Meuse and the Texel, and twenty-two thousand men stood ready to defend their flag.

The first battle of the war, fought while De Ruyter was still in distant seas, ended in a defeat to the arms of the Netherlands. On the 13th of June, 1665, the rival fleets met near Loestoffe, in Suffolk. The British ships numbered a hundred and sixteen, led by the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, and Montague, and Vice-admirals Lawson, Mengs, and Ayscue — a formidable array of ships and commanders. Admiral Obdam van Wassenar was at the head of the Dutch fleet.

The battle, which from all accounts seems to have been one of extraordinary fury and of surprising lack of order on the part of the Dutch, lasted from early dawn until sunset. The British had the weather-gage, but the advantage on both sides seemed to be about equal throughout the morning. Toward one o'clock the British blue squadron broke through the enemy's line, and soon after Admiral Obdam's ship, which was in close conflict with the British admiral, blew up

with a terrific explosion. All on board perished. Thrown into confusion, the Dutch fleet retreated to shelter along the coast of Holland.

This was the news that greeted De Ruyter on his arrival. Already rumors had reached him during his home voyage that war had broken out, and that a British fleet lay waiting to intercept him on his return. By making a long sweep northward near Iceland and Norway, and favored by a dense fog, he ran into the Ems undetected, and anchored before the fort of Delfzyl, in the early days of August.

The news of his return spread rapidly throughout the country and was received with demonstrations of joy and thanksgiving. Feeling that he alone could retrieve the great calamity that had befallen them, the people acclaimed him as their destined saviour. Although the entire nation had been overwhelmed with consternation at the first reverse of the war, the States had not been idle, and De Ruyter found a fleet of ninety-three warships ready to put to sea.

He was immediately appointed lieutenant-admiral-general, and two weeks after his return was formally installed as commander-in-chief of the fleets. On a day late in August he ran out of the Texel and steered for Bergen, a port in Norway, where a rich merchant fleet, with stores from the East Indies and Smyrna, lay waiting for a protecting escort to home ports.

The junction successfully made, the immense fleet turned southward; but it had hardly left port when it was overtaken by a storm of terrific fury. For days the ships were hurled over the waves, scattered, and tossed hither and thither. Many ships were lost and others severely damaged. With this second failure the naval year closed, and the ships returned to harbor for the winter.

The second year of the war opened more brilliantly. The eight fall and winter months had been spent at the dockyards in building and equipping a new fleet. On a day late in May, De Ruyter ran out of the Texel in his flag-ship the *Seven Provinces*, at the head of a hundred sail, which were armed with five thousand guns and carried twenty-two thousand men. Beside these, there were fire-ships and smaller craft. The fleet was divided into three squadrons: one commanded by Evertsen, another by Cornelis Tromp, and the third by De Ruyter himself. It was a gallant array.

The men were filled with hope and determination, for the Dutch never fought more valiantly than after defeat. Yet they little dreamed, when they made all sail, that they were setting out to fight one of the most furious and prolonged actions recorded in naval history — a battle that for splendid courage, endurance, and resolute determination has scarcely been surpassed. It was the heroic four-days' struggle against the British fleet

of eighty-one large men-of-war under the command of Prince Rupert, Monk, and Ayscue.

At the North Foreland De Ruyter fell in with the enemy bearing down full sail under a stiff breeze. The meeting was terrible. The front squadrons on both sides mingled at once in fierce combat, and the contest was obstinately continued until evening. Three British vessels were captured, two Dutch men-of-war were blown up, and Tromp's flag-ship became helpless.

The next morning the fight was renewed. Again and again Monk attacked his enemy; time after time De Ruyter charged the British fleet. Each side gained some advantage, but the slender British frigates, loaded with guns, began to roll and lurch in the heavy sea, while the larger vessels of the Dutch kept steadier decks. Broadside followed broadside with undiminished fury from early dawn till eight o'clock at night. At the close of this second day three successive fire-ships were sent by Evertsen against Sir John Harman, rear-admiral of one of the British squadrons, who displayed the most splendid bravery in saving his vessel.

On the third day Prince Rupert joined Monk, with a squadron of twenty battle-ships, and again the struggle was renewed. But even with this additional force the British found that De Ruyter was too strong for them. Each side had lost about twenty vessels; the men had been reduced by sickness, wounds, and death; yet each day the fury on

both sides increased. An eye-witness declared that such dogged courage and endurance had never been seen.

At daybreak, on the fourth day, was begun a combat more fearful than on any of the preceding days. Finally, toward the close of the afternoon, De Ruyter hoisted a red flag as the signal for a general attack — an order carried out with so much vigor that the British began to waver. And when the fourth day closed, the whole Dutch fleet was sailing in pursuit of the enemy. "This fourth day," says Vice-admiral Jordan, "at seven at night, most of our great ships disabled in masts, yards, rigging, the want of men to ply our guns, and powder and shot nearly all spent, forced our retreat." Then a fog spread over the water, and when the fifth day dawned, not a British vessel was to be seen from the Dutch mastheads, and De Ruyter assembled his fleet and returned home. The stubborn courage and the spirit shown on both sides turned every man into a hero, and this engagement stands out as the most noted of Holland's naval battles, one in a long chain of contests upon the sea.

The splendid victory of the Dutch, while it crippled and shattered their fleet, and cost them the life of their brave Vice-admiral Evertsen, opened the new campaign with brilliant promise of success. In nineteen days after the return of the damaged remnants of the Dutch fleet De Ruy-

ter again set sail for the Downs with eighty-eight ships of war and a large army of men.

The project to land a Dutch army on the shores of England having failed from want of pilots and the absence of buoys and beacons, De Ruyter spent a month in cruising along the coast. The British, meanwhile, were actively equipping a new fleet, and early in August Monk ran out of the Thames with ninety men-of-war under his command. Near the North Foreland he sighted the enemy, and anchoring off Norfolk's Land, within two miles of the Dutch, waited for the dawn to begin the battle.

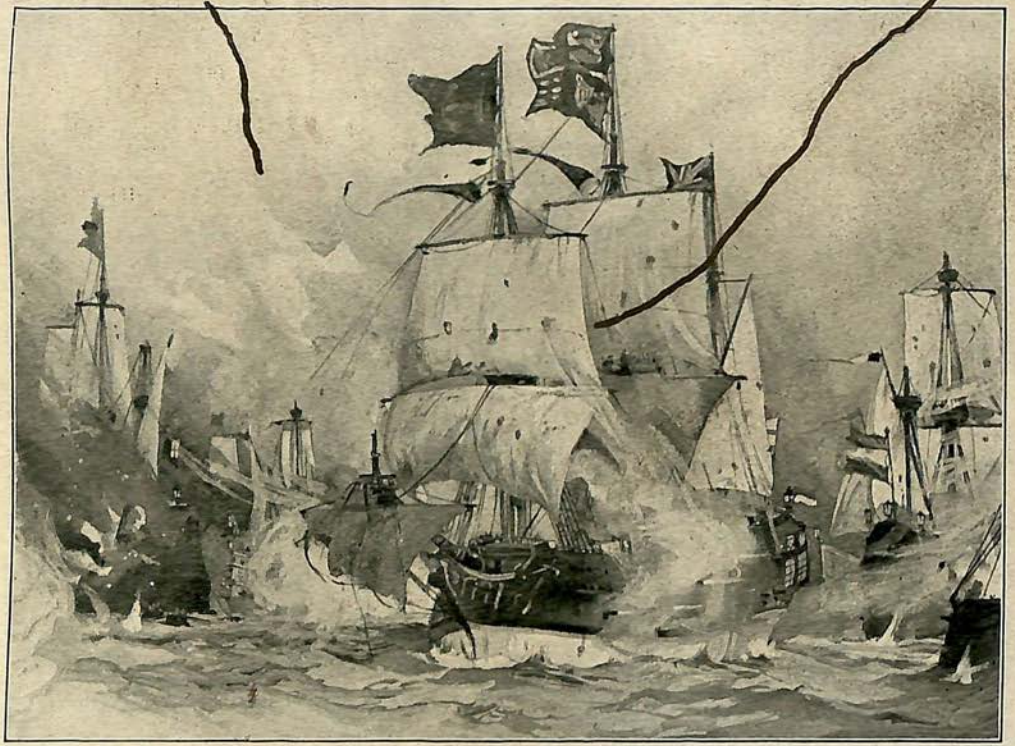
The British had many advantages over their enemy. Their heavy ships and long-range guns gave them decided superiority. They were besides masters in the art of presenting a splendid and solid battle array. The Dutch fleet lacked unity of action. The separate squadrons, each representing a different province, and sent out by a different admiralty, often acted independently of one another, and their leaders ignored the signals made by the commander-in-chief. In the heat of action the rivalries and jealousies between the squadrons of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland overcame even the sense of duty and the love of country. Nowhere were the defects of this naval system more strongly brought out or more fatal than in the battle of the 4th of August, 1666.

In the clear morning air, before the sun had

risen, the two lines of war-ships, stretching out like vast wings over the water, advanced upon each other. De Ruyter's fleet was divided into three squadrons: the van commanded by John Evertsen, the centre by De Ruyter himself, and the rear by Cornelis Tromp.

The squadrons of Zealand and Friesland, which composed the van, were the first to begin the engagement, and advanced with overimpetuosity upon the enemy. They were soon separated from the rest of the fleet, and exposed to a galling fire. John Evertsen, whose father, four brothers, and one son had already perished in the service of their country, was shot during the early part of the engagement, and died soon after. His vice-admirals, Hiddes de Vries and Koenders, were also killed at the outset. Filled with dismay at the loss of their leaders, the squadrons fell into hopeless confusion; the crews mutinied, and the officers beat an ignominious retreat.

Meanwhile the impetuous Tromp had engaged the British rear under Sir Jeremy Smith, and after a brisk encounter had allowed himself to be duped into pursuing his antagonist who had feigned a retreat. His separation from the rest of the fleet left the centre under De Ruyter to bear the full fury of the British fire, and, while Tromp displayed great personal bravery, his failure to support his chief was the main cause of the defeat.



The English and the Dutch Fleets in the Sea-Fight on the Downs, 1666.

Left with only eight ships to fight two squadrons of the enemy, De Ruyter defended himself with incredible valor throughout the entire day. Under the terrible fire of twenty-two British ships, his own vessels suffered fearful damage. When night fell, the Dutch admiral still held his position, hoping that morning would bring Tromp and the van in answer to his signals. But when the light dawned there was still not a friendly sail to be seen on the wide stretch of water.

Abandoned by the rest of his fleet, De Ruyter with only seven ships was again exposed to the full fury of the enemy's murderous fire. The British had ranged themselves in a half-moon, surrounding De Ruyter on three sides, and Monk, confident of capturing his great rival, pursued him with relentless obstinacy. First a fire-ship was sent against the *Seven Provinces*, which De Ruyter evaded only by his marvellous promptness and skill. Then a simultaneous and terrible broadside from three of the British vessels made the Dutch flag-ship reel and tremble. Every device that the British admiral's ingenuity and hatred could invent was used against his almost helpless antagonist.

For one moment De Ruyter lost his self-possession. He who had never been seen to abandon his firm control in every extremity exclaimed in his agony, "Oh, my God! how wretched am I, that among so many thousand balls not one will

bring me death!" Almost immediately he regained his composure, and under the unremitting fire of Monk's batteries led his few battered ships, through a steady and glorious retreat, to the shallow water and the sand-banks of Zealand, where he was protected from pursuit. Monk dared not follow him, lest his larger ships should run aground, and De Ruyter cast anchor off Walcheren without leaving a single vessel in the hands of the enemy.

Impressed with the marvellous skill and endurance shown by De Ruyter in this retreat, the king of France sent him the insignia of the order of St. Michael, and his own portrait richly set in diamonds. But in spite of the Dutch admiral's bravery, the British were now masters of the northern seas. They carried fire and destruction to the Texel, burned merchant vessels, and massacred the inhabitants of the fishing villages.

Louis XIV, who at the outbreak of the war had promised assistance to the Dutch, now decided to give his tardy support to his allies, and sent a French squadron under the command of the Duke of Beaufort to the Channel. A futile attempt at a juncture of the two fleets ended the year 1666.

The new fighting year was to open more brilliantly for the Netherlands. In England the long winter months of naval inactivity had been passed by Charles II and his court in pleasures and festivities. Peace negotiations were in slow and

deliberate progress, and the king, overconfident in their success, had ordered the dismantling of many of his battle-ships and a return to a peace footing.

This was the moment for the Dutch to strike a heavy blow. The equipment of a powerful fleet had been eagerly pressed forward throughout the winter. Toward the middle of June, 1667, fifty-four ships of war and fourteen fire-ships set sail from the Texel under De Ruyter, and on the 17th cast anchor near the almost defenceless mouth of the Thames.

A squadron under Van Ghent sailed victoriously up the river among the dangerous sands and shoals, stormed the fort of Sheerness, seized the isle of Sheppey, entered the Medway, and came within thirty miles of London. At Chatham, England's great arsenal, a number of first-rate men-of-war lay at anchor, the largest ships of the British navy; they had been half dismantled, and De Ruyter was eager to destroy them.

The British made hasty preparations for their defence. Six ships were sunk in the Medway, a chain was stretched across the narrow entrance, which was only wide enough for one vessel to pass at a time, and four ships of the line, two frigates, and two shore batteries protected the passage from behind. The entrance seemed effectually blocked.

The first of the Dutch ships to attack the line was a small frigate commanded by Captain Van

Brakel. Under a brisk fire from the batteries and ships, he boldly advanced upon the chain, gave a broadside to the *Unity* and boarded her. At the same time a fire-ship forced the chain and broke it. Then one by one the rest of the Dutch fleet sailed through the opened passage and made an irresistible attack on the British squadron. The batteries surrendered, and the *Royal Charles* and four other ships were captured or burned.

Advancing up the river, under a heavy cannonading from Upnor Castle, De Ruyter burned three large, unrigged men-of-war and took possession of great quantities of arms and ammunition. With a fair wind the Dutch sailed back to the mouth of the Thames, harassed the coast as far as Plymouth, cruised up and down the Channel, and carried consternation among the seaboard towns.

Terror spread throughout London. The pride of Britain had been humbled; this blow to her naval power had deprived her of her sovereignty of the seas. A further resistance seemed dangerous. Peace negotiations were hastened, and the Dutch, desiring only a speedy and successful ending to the war, were glad to reach an understanding. The peace of Breda, imposed upon Great Britain by victorious Holland, and signed on the 31st of July, 1667, insured the safety and liberty of Dutch commerce, and established the rights of the States in northern and southern waters.

Great were the rejoicings in the United Prov-

inces at the news of the signing of the treaty. The people gave themselves up to festivities and amusements. Medals were struck off in token of the national satisfaction. Honors and magnificent gifts were heaped upon the victor, and the poets of Holland sang his praises.

Meanwhile De Ruyter, simple and unassuming, too strong to be spoiled by flattery, and too noble to be influenced by favors, retired to his home in Amsterdam to enjoy his well-earned rest. There he lived quietly and frugally with his wife and children. His house was modest in size, his way of living was most unpretentious, and the great lieutenant-admiral wore clothes no better than those of a common sea captain.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE NETHERLANDS WERE SAVED

DE RUYTER had been living in his happy and peaceful home for little more than four years when he was again called out to serve his country. The peace of Breda and the Triple Alliance between Great Britain, Sweden, and the United Provinces had excited the wrath and indignation of the king of France. Louis XIV, covetous of the rich land of the Netherlands, had long meditated their conquest either by craft or by force. He at last determined to resort to arms.

His first step was to induce the weak and vacillating Charles II to break faith with the Dutch and to enter into a secret treaty with France. According to this agreement France was to invade the United Provinces by land, while Great Britain attacked them by sea. It seemed hardly possible that the little republic, left to fight her battles alone, could long hold out against these two formidable opponents.

War was declared by France and Great Britain in April, 1672. Louis XIV, with the Duke of Orleans and his famous generals, Condé and

Turenne, invaded the Netherlands on the side of the Rhine, at the head of an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men. Town after town surrendered or was carried by assault. The Rhine was crossed, and the invaders swept to the very doors of Holland. Unable to oppose a firm and strenuous resistance to the enemy by land, the entire safety of the republic now lay in the hands of De Ruyter.

The Dutch fleet had been increased to ninety-one ships of the line and frigates, with a number of fireships and yachts. In May, 1672, De Ruyter sailed in quest of the enemy. The stakes for which he was playing were high — nothing less than the independence, life, and safety of his country — and in his hands he held the last cards with which to play his dangerous game. If defeat were to come to him, if this the last fleet of the republic were to be destroyed, the United Provinces, torn by internal dissensions, riddled by treachery and cowardice, overwhelmed by a triumphant army of invaders, would be powerless to equip a new one.

On the 7th of June, after a week of search, De Ruyter sighted the allied British and French fleets, under the command of the Duke of York, covering with its white sail the waters of Solebay. It was a formidable array — one hundred and forty-nine men-of-war, vastly superior in size and in the number of their men and guns to those of the Dutch.

Warned by a lookout of the approach of the enemy, the British promptly formed in solid battle array and prepared for the attack. The Dutch line was divided into three squadrons: De Ruyter in the centre, Van Ghent on the right, and Admiral Bankert on the left. As the fleet of the republic advanced upon its enemies, De Ruyter knelt down in his cabin and prayed for Divine help in the coming struggle, and for courage and wisdom to guide him in this great crisis.

On reaching the deck he espied in the distance the red flag of the Duke of York, and turning to his pilot ordered him to steer straight upon the British flag-ship. A terrific broadside from both vessels opened the battle. For two hours the British and the Dutch admirals lay side by side in stubborn conflict, and enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke. By nine o'clock the mainmast of the British flag-ship was shot away, and the Duke of York was obliged to transfer his flag to the *St. Michael*. Later in the day his second ship also was so much damaged that he again changed his flag to the *London*.

On the left wing the fighting was not severe. Count d'Estrées, who commanded the French contingent, took no active part in the engagement, and throughout the day his squadron kept at long range, although Admiral Bankert tried every device to bring him into close action. But around the right wing the battle raged furiously. Early

in the day Van Ghent, who had thrown himself with impetuosity upon the squadron of the blue, was killed by a cannon ball. His death was concealed from the rest of his squadron, and the fight was continued with undiminished vigor while his flag still flew from his masthead. The British vice-admiral, Montague, perished with his ship, the *Royal James*, which was boarded and fired.

De Ruyter in the *Seven Provinces* kept his stand in the centre of the fight until the end. The British admiral and three vice-admirals had attacked him, ship after ship had surrounded him, but each in turn had been obliged to retire without silencing his guns. From his vessel alone twenty-five thousand pounds of powder and thirty-five hundred balls were fired. At one time he was isolated from the rest of his fleet, unsupported except by a yacht and one frigate. He was at that moment in imminent peril, for the Duke of York attempted to cut off his retreat, and a fire-ship was sent against him. But De Ruyter dexterously extricated himself, and the British admiral acknowledged that he had been outmanœuvred at every point.

A British lieutenant, who had been brought as a prisoner on board the *Seven Provinces*, said of De Ruyter, that he was at once "admiral, captain, pilot, sailor, and soldier." De Ruyter himself spoke of this action as the most desperate and prolonged battle in which he had ever taken part.

Although the battle raged with steady and unabated fury from seven in the morning until nightfall, neither side had gained a decisive victory when darkness separated them, but the advantage lay with the Dutch. They had lost fewer ships than the British, and had prevented a descent upon the coast of Zealand. The next morning found the two fleets still face to face, but neither offered to renew the battle. The allies retired to the coast of England, and the Dutch set sail for Zealand.

De Ruyter had saved the republic. Relieved from the fear of a descent upon the coast and of the overwhelming disaster of a double invasion, the United Provinces could concentrate all their energies upon resisting the enemy by land. Two-thirds of the fleet was dismantled; the naval troops, arms, and ammunition were transferred to the land forces, which were in sore need of being recruited.

The united Dutch and Spanish regiments of infantry and cavalry amounted to only twelve thousand men. This was the last remnant of opposition that Grand-pensionary De Witt could bring against the vast army of invasion. Success after success marked the rapid progress of the French troops. The entire provinces of Gelderland, Overyssel, and Utrecht fell into the hands of Louis XIV. The very heart of Holland was surrounded by the enemy.

In this extremity one resource was left for the

deliverance of Holland. The waters of the sea and the rivers could be called to her aid. By an heroic sacrifice of wealth and prosperity, by the destruction of houses, gardens, and crops, the liberty of the Dutch, dear to them beyond all possessions, might yet be saved. Intersected by canals, rivers, and lakes, surrounded by seas and gulfs, Holland had protected herself against an invasion of the waters by an elaborate system of dikes, ditches, and sluices.

This very system could be used as a last resource of defence by submerging the entire country under water. Amsterdam was the first to take the generous step. The other cities followed her noble example. The sluices were opened, the dikes cut, the sea rushed in, and the whole land lay under water. The patriotism of the Hollanders was tested to the last point of devotion and self-sacrifice.

But the danger of conquest was not the only one to which the republic was exposed. Exasperated by the events of the war, discouraged by the constant reverses of their arms, the people of Holland rose in open rebellion against the existing government. Charged with crime and treason, heaped with every unjust accusation, the brothers De Witt, who for so many years had devoted their lives with heroic constancy to the interests of their country, were imprisoned and grossly murdered by the enraged populace.

Even De Ruyter, the valiant leader, whose life and genius had been given to the republic and who in peril and anguish had fought her battles, did not escape from the popular fury. As a friend of the De Witts, he also tasted the vacillations of the people's favor. While he was still at the head of his fleet, sailing in quest of the allies, his house in Amsterdam was surrounded by an excited mob, and his wife and children in danger of a violent death.

The rebellion in Holland ended in a change of government and the proclamation of the Prince of Orange as William III, Stadtholder. Although the new stadtholder continued De Ruyter in his position as commander of the fleet, the power of the navy gradually declined after his accession. Not more than fifty-two poorly equipped and incompletely armed ships of the line and twelve frigates were left for the protection of the coast.

In 1673, a year after the battle of Solebay, De Ruyter had stationed himself with this reduced force at Schoonevelt, and lay at anchor waiting for the allied fleet which was again meditating a landing on the coast of Zealand. On the 7th of June the combined British and French squadrons appeared upon the waters of the North Sea and bore down upon their enemy. A hundred and forty-five sail, of which fifty-three were ships of the line, with ten thousand men on board, formed a powerful antagonist to the small handful of Dutchmen.

De Ruyter and Cornelis Tromp received the shock of the first encounter with firmness and spirit. The unequal fight was kept up all day. Tromp's impetuosity carried him into the very thick of the battle, and four times he transferred his flag from ship to ship. The enemy's fire raked vessel after vessel from helm to stern, and completely disabled them. Yet darkness fell on the combatants before the contest ended in any definite result. To the Dutch it was equal to a victory, as it had saved their shores a second time from invasion.

On the 14th of June a second drawn battle was followed by the retreat of the British to the Thames. They however did not wholly renounce their project of a descent upon the Dutch coast, and toward the middle of August a powerful fleet, a hundred and fifty strong, set sail under Prince Rupert. This was the last time for a hundred years that the British and Dutch were to measure their power at sea.

So stubborn and plucky a foe as the Dutch could not be vanquished even by twice their numbers. The spectacle of the resolute Netherlanders, fighting for their liberties against the two most powerful nations of Europe, and holding their beloved swamps against legions of men and vast fleets of ships, is one that never fails to rouse our admiration and wonder. They held their shores to the end, and while they were not victors, neither

were they vanquished. They forced their enemies to desist from very weariness. They would not give in, and their indomitable courage and determination held their mighty opponents at bay. In this last fight against their great sea rivals the Dutch finally chased the British from their shores and freed themselves from one at least of their antagonists.

Peace with Great Britain was soon afterward concluded, and the war continued against France alone. The naval operations of the campaign were now carried to distant waters. De Ruyter was sent with a squadron to the Mediterranean to assist Spain against France, and in the last battles of his life he had for antagonist the famous French admiral, Du Quesne, founder of the naval greatness of France.

It was hardly a fair trial of strength between the two renowned leaders, for under the government of the Prince of Orange the efficiency of the Dutch marine had greatly declined. The navy, which had been the chief interest of Grand-pensionary De Witt, had become subservient to the army, the favorite child of Stadtholder William.

We can well understand the anger and indignation of De Ruyter when he was sent to uphold the honor of his country's flag in southern seas with only eighteen ships, and those miserably equipped. When the veteran Dutch admiral set

sail from Helvoetsluys on what was to be his last expedition, he felt a conviction that he would never return. "It is my duty," he said, "to obey the commands of the state;" but he realized the terrible inefficiency of his squadron, and the almost inevitable result of so rash an enterprise.

Flying his flag from the *Unity*, his own ship the *Seven Provinces* being too damaged for the voyage, he sailed for the waters of the Mediterranean. His destination was Sicily. The fair island of the South had risen in revolt against Spain, the only ally of Holland, and had given over her allegiance to Louis XIV.

A Spanish fleet had vainly attempted to reconquer Messina, and had retreated ignominiously before a far inferior force. Admirals Vivonne and Du Quesne were in full possession of the harbor, and the French continued to strengthen themselves along the whole line of the coast.

Early in January, 1676, De Ruyter reached the shores of Sicily, and sighted the French fleet between Stromboli and Salino. Du Quesne at once made the signal to engage. The attack was vigorous, and was met with obstinate fortitude. The Dutch, although inferior in strength both in ships and guns, showed their good fighting qualities and defended themselves with spirit. Night closed upon another drawn battle, and the fight was not renewed in the morning. Both fleets retired to port to repair damages.

During the following weeks reënforcements arrived on both sides. A squadron of twelve ships of the line and four frigates increased the numbers of the French fleet, and De Ruyter succeeded in making a junction with the Spanish admiral, La Cerda. The advantage in numbers and equipment still lay with Vivonne and Du Quesne, who counted thirty ships of war against twenty-four of the combined Dutch and Spanish fleet. The Spaniards, besides, proved to be more of a hindrance than a help to De Ruyter, and still further diminished his chances of success.

The Dutch were threatening Agosta, when on the 22d of April the French fleet hove suddenly in sight. De Ruyter signalled the attack, and under the smoking crater of Mt. Etna the rival men-of-war bore down on one another, enveloped in the dense smoke of their broadsides. The action continued at close quarters all day, and the firing was incessant.

In the morning, not long after the engagement had begun, De Ruyter was standing on the quarter-deck, giving orders and directing the fight, when a ball shot away part of his left foot and shattered his right leg. He was thrown on to the lower deck; but with wonderful spirit he continued to give his orders and encourage his men.

When darkness fell, the French retreated to Messina, and on the following morning the Dutch fleet carried their wounded commander to Syra-

cuse, where he was tended with all the care that love and skill could suggest. But his wounds proved fatal. Surrounded by his faithful captains, in the cabin of his flag-ship, the chief of Dutch seamen died. He had given to the Netherlands, during his life, a short but glorious mastery of the seas; but his work did not survive him. With him passed away the power and glory of the Dutch navy.

MARSHAL ANNE-HILARION DE TOURVILLE

1642–1701

MARSHAL ANNE-HILARION DE TOURVILLE

CHAPTER XI

THE FOUNDING OF FRENCH SEA-POWER

It has been the lot of each of the chief maritime nations of Europe to grasp and to hold for a moment or for a century the supreme sovereignty of the waters. One of these brilliant but transitory flashes of triumph came to France during the reign of Louis XIV and at the very outset of her career as a great naval power.

Four names have come down to us as personifying this war drama of the sea: Colbert and his son the Marquis de Seignelay, the gifted ministers of Louis XIV. who created the French navy, and the two admirals, Du Quesne and Tourville, who led the French fleets to victory. Wholly unlike in birth, character, and talent, but equal in zeal, ambition, and patriotic devotion, these four illustrious men shared the glory of having made France a great naval power. But while Du Quesne, with his experience and ability as a seaman, prepared the way for the culminating triumphs of the

French fleets, it was his successor Tourville, the most brilliant of the admirals of France, who won for France that glorious but transient sovereignty of the seas.

Anne-Hilarion de Cotentin, Comte de Tourville, a descendant on his maternal side of the noble family of La Rochefoucauld, was born in 1642, at the castle of Tourville in Normandy. His father, Cæsar, Baron de Tourville and de Fimes, who was at one time attaché of the Duc de Saint-Simon, and afterward first gentleman in waiting and a close friend of King Louis XIII, died in 1647, when Anne-Hilarion was only five years of age. Slender, pale, almost delicate as a boy, it was little thought that this frail child was destined to spend forty-five years of his life in active, tireless service on the sea, and that he was to be counted as one of the foremost commanders of his time. His novitiate in arms was one that early developed those brilliant and daring traits of character which distinguished him throughout his life.

Anne-Hilarion was the youngest of three brothers, and as cadet of the family he was destined for the famous Order of the Knights of Malta, into which he was entitled to enter by his noble birth. Admitted to the Order as a Knight of Justice at the age of fourteen, he became a member of the privileged band of sixteen pages who daily attended on the Grand-master — a widely

coveted distinction, and one for which a large number of candidates yearly enrolled their names.

After three years of page duty Tourville spent a twelvemonth in probation, and at eighteen was received as a professed Knight of the Order. This was the opening of his career as a seaman; the next seven years of his life were passed on the Mediterranean, fighting the Moorish buccaneers who swarmed over the narrow seas, and protecting the commerce of Europe from the ravages of the Barbary Corsairs.

These wild Moslem pirates, the highwaymen of the Mediterranean, whose haunts lay among the creeks and inlets of the North African coast, had already for more than a hundred and fifty years been a thorn in the side of Christendom. They spread terror along the southern shores of Europe, they ravaged the seaport towns of Italy, Sicily, and Spain, they interrupted commerce, held up rich convoys bound to distant marts, and chained thousands of Christian slaves to the galley benches of their robber craft. Many of the greatest seamen of successive ages, admirals of Italy, Spain, France, and Holland, had spent the best years of their lives in fighting these leeches of trade. But their natural rivals and untiring enemies, those whose mission it had become to dispute and weaken their power, were the Knights of Malta, themselves the Christian buccaneers of the Mediterranean.

The navy of the Order, which had gained a

widespread reputation in its brilliant crusades against the crescent, consisted in early times and down to the period of Tourville in a fleet of galleys under the immediate command of the general of the galleys. Every knight was obliged to serve in four cruises of six months each, and Tourville thus found himself launched upon a career that was to bring him future fame and distinction. In his first encounter with the Barbary Corsairs he exposed himself heedlessly to the raking fire of the enemy, and fought with a reckless daring that gained him the admiration of friend and foe. Wounded in three places, he still kept his gallant stand and refused to be carried off the deck.

A long succession of heroic deeds won for him a reputation for ability and intrepid courage that spread from Venice to the royal court of France. The Venetian republic, grateful for his services in freeing her from the depredations of the Algerine sea robbers, gave him the titles of "Protector of Maritime Commerce" and "Invincible Seaman." Louis XIV, whose attention had been attracted by accounts of the Maltese knight's successful cruises, called him to court, and in 1667 Tourville sailed for Paris and was presented to the king, who received him with flattering approval.

His career was now assured. The great monarch, with his insatiable love of glory and his passion for war, keenly realized the necessity of surrounding himself with the best naval and mili-

tary talent of France. Tourville, shortly after his presentation, received his commission as captain in the royal navy, and was given the command of a ship.

The relations of France to other continental nations were, meanwhile, rapidly reaching a crisis, and the services of Tourville were to be needed before long in the waters of the English Channel in the war against Holland. France and Great Britain had united to crush the power of the Netherlands, and in 1672 sent a formal declaration of hostilities to the Dutch republic. Was France in a position to enter upon a war with the foremost maritime nation of Europe — a war that must necessarily involve a long series of contests upon the sea?

During the years when Tourville had been laying the foundations of his renown France had given birth to a navy. It was one of the dazzling feats of the reign of the great monarch.

The policy of expansion and conquest of Louis XIV had been ably seconded by the talented statesman whom he had placed at the head of the departments of finance and marine, the famous Colbert. On coming into office in 1661 the new minister found the country in a state of disorder and financial ruin. Gross corruption in the administration, bankruptcy in the treasury, overwhelming taxation, and starvation and death among the peasantry had undermined the very life of the land.

Colbert, believing that one of the most potent

influences in securing the wealth and prosperity of the state lay in developing her trade, knew also that to acquire and maintain supremacy in commerce against jealous and powerful rivals meant the protection of shipping interests by a strong fleet. After having restored order to the internal affairs of the country, and placed the public treasury on a firmer financial basis, Colbert turned his energies to the formation of a navy. In 1661 the royal navy of France consisted of six miserable galleys and two war-ships, with an appropriation of only 300,000 francs. Ten years later Colbert had built up a navy with a budget of 13,000,000 francs, and a fleet of over fifty ships of the line.

Never before had the creation of a navy been accomplished within so short a time. It was the most brilliant of Colbert's achievements. Without it the glories of Palermo and of Beachy Head would have been lost to France. Energy in administration and speed in construction were the minister's mottoes. The dockyards bustled with activity, ship-builders were imported from Holland to build vessels that were afterward to wrest the supremacy of the Mediterranean from the grasp of the Dutch. Practice and strenuous watchfulness carried the rapidity of the work to an incredible point of perfection. Thus, able statesmen and skilful workers made possible the sudden rise of the French navy, and placed weapons in the hands of Louis XIV with which he

could gratify his love of glory, and his intolerance of all rivals in power.

Envy of the enormous commercial wealth of the Netherlands was, in fact, the main cause of the Franco-British alliance and the declaration of war of 1672.

Although Holland was almost powerless to repel the formidable French army that overwhelmed her by land, she was fully able to offer a stubborn resistance to the allies on her natural element, the sea. In the first important naval engagement of the war, the battle of Solebay, Tourville served in his capacity of captain under Vice-admiral d'Estrées against the great De Ruyter. But in this contest the French squadron took little or no active part, leaving the hard fighting to their British allies. Not so in the Mediterranean, which, during the next four years, became the centre of operations, and where the French bore the full brunt of the war.

Great Britain, weary of hostilities, had withdrawn from the contest and had signed a treaty of peace with the Dutch. France was left to continue the war alone. Determined to destroy the commerce of the Netherlands, she sent her men-of-war to the Mediterranean; and in the waters of the South, which then became the centre of operations, she acquitted herself with honor, and her young squadrons won their first laurels at Stromboli, at Agosta, and at Palermo.

In these great battles of the Mediterranean, which established French supremacy in southern waters, Tourville took an active part under the leadership of Admiral Du Quesne, the famous pioneer seaman and able commander in the new navy, whose exploits were dear to the hearts of all Frenchmen. Many gallant young seamen, the best fighters in France, served under the veteran leader who was to make his country the mistress of the Mediterranean; but the dashing figure of Captain Tourville, the future marshal of France, then only thirty-four years of age, stood out from the rest in brilliancy and promise.

Spain, who had allied herself with Holland, was threatened with the loss of one of her most important possessions in the Queen Island of the Mediterranean. The seaport town of Messina, in Sicily, had risen in revolt against the Catholic king; the insurgents had captured the forts, and gained almost entire possession of the city. Too weak, however, to carry on the rebellion without foreign aid, the Messinese asked for the protection of the king of France. Admiral Vivonne was lying at anchor with his fleet off the coast of Catalonia. Under his orders were gathered some of the most renowned seamen of France, — Preuilly, Valbelle, Tourville. He at once detached Valbelle, on the 27th of September, 1674, with a small squadron to help the insurgents, and in the following January, 1675, sent a second relief expedition in which

Tourville served as captain. The Spaniards had recaptured several forts, among them the Pharo and Fort Reggio. A Spanish army, encamped outside the gates of Messina, was pressing the city vigorously by land, and a fleet of forty-one sail guarded the entrance to the Straits. Messina lay at the mercy of the Spaniards surrounded by land and sea. On the 2d of January Valbelle's little squadron of six ships of the line, one frigate, three fire-ships, and a convoy of supplies bore gallantly down under full sail.

With a fresh wind and an incoming tide the French ships dashed through the channel, borne swiftly along on the rapid current; past the barricade of Spanish galleys, under the fire of the forts, they forced their entrance into the Straits with bewildering audacity. The amazed Spaniards in their heavy men-of-war offered no resistance. Messina was relieved by a brilliant stroke.

The new supply of provisions, however, was small and was soon exhausted. In five weeks the besieged were reduced anew to starvation. But their deliverance was at hand. Early in February, Admiral Vivonne, with Du Quesne as second in command, arrived in the waters of Stromboli, and, reënforced by the squadron of Valbelle, attacked and put to flight the great Spanish armament. Caught between two fires and seized with panic, the Spaniards fled before a force of less than half their numbers. With crowded sail, even to the

spritsail, they escaped, and Admiral Vivonne sailed in triumph into Messina, where he was received with the wildest demonstrations of joy and gratitude.

During the rest of the year 1675 the French strengthened themselves in Sicily and extended their conquests along the southern coast. In these operations Tourville distinguished himself on two occasions. During the summer he was ordered to the Adriatic to intercept a small squadron of ships carrying troops for the relief of Melazzo. Hoisting all sail, he sped swiftly to the north, but it was too late. The troops had been landed on the coast of Italy and were already marching southward toward Sicily. But from a passing fishing smack Tourville learned that the three transport ships of the enemy had dropped anchor in the Gulf of Manfredonia under the guns of Fort Barletta.

Disappointed in his first venture, he now determined to surprise and capture this small squadron. Under cover of the night he approached stealthily within range and, when the first dawn of day lighted the horizon, opened fire on the enemy. After a brisk cannonading four boats with a crew of boarders were sent to complete the capture. Under a raking fire from the batteries of the fort the intrepid Frenchmen cut the cables of two ships, and after some severe fighting set fire to the third.

On returning to Messina from this exploit the French frigate, that had accompanied Tourville to the Adriatic, was carried by the strong current under the very ramparts of Fort Reggio, and after an obstinate resistance was captured by ten Spanish galleys. With an ebb tide and a favorable wind Tourville on the *Sirène*, Captain Léry on the *Téméraire*, and one fire-ship bore down in the broad light of day upon the ten galleys in full view of the town and bastions and fort of Reggio. Fully determined to either recapture or set fire to the *Gracieuse*, Tourville stationed himself at a point from which he could train his guns on the Spanish land batteries. Then, in the heat of a raging storm of shot, the little fire-ship dashed out from under the lee of the land, grappled the frigate, and fired her. In an instant the flames wrapped the masts and rigging in a blazing mass, leaped with the wind from ship to ship and from ship to shore, and spread in a vast conflagration. Fifteen Spanish ships were burned, a powder magazine exploded and demolished part of a bastion, and a portion of the town was left in ruins. The two French captains returned to Messina with the loss of only a few men, and Tourville at once wrote to the minister of marine, praising the intrepidity of his followers, and asking that M. Serpaut, who commanded the fire-ship, should be promoted.

On the 17th of August an attack was projected on Agosta. Twenty-nine ships, under Vivonne,

anchored in the bay, and opened their broadsides on the forts that protected the harbor. While the admiral and Du Quesne were silencing the outer batteries of the enemy, Tourville had been intrusted with a more hazardous undertaking. Leading a small division of six ships to the mouth of the harbor, he forced an entrance under the galling fire of the works, and turned his broadsides into Fort Avalo, the strongest and most important of the enemy's defences. After a brisk cannonading the fort still held out, and Tourville sent Coëtlogon with a small band of men to lead a hand-to-hand assault. Under a storm of shot and stones, the first barricade was captured. Tourville, now alarmed for the safety of his friend, threw himself impetuously into a small boat, called on a few volunteers to second him, and flew to the aid of Coëtlogon. The enemy made a feint of running up a white flag; but when the French had come within close range, they let fly a furious discharge of artillery. After an hour's obstinate fight the second barricade was carried, and the fort surrendered.

The key to the harbor had been captured. The rest followed quickly, and in a few hours the town capitulated. Tourville was the hero of the day. His gallant act made the French masters of Agosta. But in writing of the engagement to the minister of marine, he speaks of his own achievement with sincere modesty. Always quick in rendering warm praise to his subordinates, and

recommending them for promotion, he was quiet and unostentatious in his personal claims to honor, attributing his successes more to the "negligence" and "cowardice" of the enemy than to his own prowess, and awarding all the glory to "Fortune." He was, however, beginning to fret at his slow promotion, and was realizing that his services had not been sufficiently recognized at headquarters. Writing to the minister after the fall of Agosta, he says, "I hope that with your help and the small successes that have fallen to my share in this campaign I shall be able this winter to leave the rank of captain which has become almost insufferable to me."

His calm remonstrances seem to have had the desired effect, for we find him in the following year raised to the rank of commodore.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONQUEST OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

WHILE these events were occupying the French in the waters of Sicily, the Dutch were preparing to send out an expedition to the assistance of their allies the Spaniards, in the hope of wresting Messina from the grasp of France. The famous De Ruyter received from William of Orange the order to hoist sail for the Mediterranean, make a juncture with the Spanish fleet, and force the rebel Sicilian town to return to the allegiance of the king of Spain. During the last days of December, 1675, De Ruyter, at the head of eighteen men-of-war, reached the scene of action, and on the 7th of January, 1676, came face to face with the French fleet in the waters of Stromboli.

The scene of the meeting was one of picturesque grandeur. The group of volcanic islands of Lipari are the outposts of Sicily — rock-sentinels that guard the entrance to the Gulf of Joy bordered by the shores of Italy and the Queen Island of the Mediterranean. On Stromboli, which forms the gateway to the gulf, stands the great lighthouse of the southern sea, rising two thousand feet above

the waters — a living volcano whose open crater feeds the flames of an ever burning beacon. At the foot of this grim mountain torch the greatest seamen of the age hastened to measure their strength and prowess.

Du Quesne, who had under his orders twenty-five battle-ships and six fire-ships, divided his fleet into three squadrons, the *Sceptre*, Tourville's ship, following close upon the flag-ship in the centre. For twenty-four hours the rival fleets lay two miles apart watching each other's movements and manœuvring to gain the wind. As the gray light of dawn spread over the skies on the morning of the 8th, a stiff wind sprang up to the advantage of the French, and Du Quesne bore down full sail upon his adversary. The Dutch received the shock firmly and opened a heavy fire upon their assailants. From ten in the morning until ten at night both sides fought at close quarters along the whole line with vigor and intrepidity.

Tourville found himself in the hottest part of the fight and gallantly supported his leader in his position as second astern. At one time he was in a hand-to-hand conflict with a huge three-decker, and his ship, torn and riddled in masts, sails, and rigging, was saved by a French fire-ship that came to his assistance. Toward the close of the day a squadron of nine Spanish galleys swept down upon the French flag-ship and annoyed her with their chase guns, but Tourville sent two 36-

pounders among them and scattered them in a precipitate flight. When darkness closed on the combatants, the loss on the two sides had been about equal, and neither had gained a decisive advantage. Although on the following day both fleets were reënforced by additional ships, neither Du Quesne nor De Ruyter ventured on a renewal of the struggle. Du Quesne sailed around Sicily and entered Messina from the south; while De Ruyter went first to Naples and afterward to Palermo to revictual and refit.

The most important action, however, was yet to come. On the 22d of April, 1676, almost at the foot of Mt. Etna, between Catania and Agosta, the French fleet of thirty men-of-war encountered the combined Dutch and Spanish squadrons, which counted twenty-seven ships of the line. Both sides bore down until within musket shot of each other. The conflict was prolonged and furious. As darkness closed in upon the antagonists, De Ruyter's flag-ship fell in with the *Saint Esprit*, at whose masthead waved the flag of Du Quesne. In a few moments the two flag-ships were wrapped in the dense smoke of their broadsides. To right and left Tourville's *Sceptre* and the *Saint Michel* brought their guns to bear on the plucky Dutchman and forced him to retreat. Not until later was it known that De Ruyter lay wounded in the cock-pit. A ball from one of the French ships had shattered one of his legs earlier in the engagement,

and thrown him on to the lower deck. Although he died five days later, his wound at the time was not thought to be really serious.

At ten o'clock the firing ceased and the combatants separated. The next morning in rain and mist the allied fleet, crippled and shattered, retired to Syracuse, and the French, after keeping the sea until the 1st of May, sailed into the harbor of Messina.

The death of De Ruyter was the knell of the allied fleet and an irreparable blow to Holland. With the loss of the greatest of its heroes and its ablest commander, the Dutch navy soon declined in power, and the next sea battle, fought on the 2d of June in the harbor of Palermo, was, for the French, one of the most complete naval victories on record. After revictualling and repairing their damaged ships, the allies had sailed out of Syracuse harbor, doubled the island of Sicily on the south, and entered the port of Palermo, there to await the movements of the enemy's fleet. They were not kept long in suspense. On the 28th of May the French fleet of twenty-nine ships of the line, twenty-five galleys, and nine fire-ships put to sea from the harbor of Messina, and, passing through the channel of the Pharo, sailed northward in search of the Hispano-Dutch armament.

The Duke of Vivonne, viceroy of Sicily and nominal head of the Mediterranean fleet, went in person to share in this last glorious venture of the French

arms. Running up his flag on Tourville's ship the *Sceptre*, which thus became the chief vessel of the centre, he divided his fleet into three squadrons, Du Quesne, as vice-admiral, taking command of the vanguard. Four days after leaving Messina the French fleet sighted the harbor of Palermo, and there the combined fleet of the allies rode at anchor in complete battle array. The Spaniards held the centre under Don Diego de Ibarra, La Cerda having been disgraced after his last defeat. On the right and left wings were the Dutch ships under the leadership of Admiral Haan, who had succeeded to the chief command after the death of De Ruyter. The ships were moored in a straight and compact line of battle, three or four cable lengths from the entrance to the roadstead. Some of the vessels were sheltered by the mole. The combined fleet numbered twenty-seven ships of the line, four fire-ships, and nineteen galleys.

As soon as the French vanguard sighted the allied fleet, Vivonne called four of his most trusted officers and sent them on a difficult and perilous undertaking. Among them was Tourville, the youngest of the commodores. They were ordered to make a complete examination of the enemy's position, and to draw up a plan of the defences. Setting out in a small sail-boat, in broad daylight, and supported by the squadron of galleys, the valiant and devoted little band entered the harbor and approached to within close range of

the serried battle front. Sailing up and down the enemy's line, Tourville and his companions passed it in review from end to end. Struck with admiration for their audacious courage, the enemy looked on in silence, and not a gun was fired.

On their return they reported that the Hispano-Dutch fleet was moored under the city; the left wing was flanked by the mole and its two works, the centre was covered by the strong fortress of Castellamare, and the right wing by another fort and the city bastions—a formidable line of defences which completely protected the approach to the fleet. On the sides and in all the spaces between the great ships of war hovered the galleys, forming an apparently impregnable front. The commander-in-chief immediately called a council of war to decide on the plan of attack. Tourville, quick to conceive, daring in resolution, and prompt in action, had already framed a plan, and after long discussion it was adopted.

Early on the morning of the 2d of June, with a stiff breeze blowing from the northwest, the French fleet sailed, in order of battle, through the entrance to the harbor. Led by a detachment of nine ships of the line and five fire-ships, which were to open the action by attacking the head of the enemy's line, the entire column entered the bay in silence and took up its position opposite the Hispano-Dutch fleet. Every deck was cleared for action, every man was at his post, the guns were ready to be

fired, but not a shot came from the French port-holes until the anchors were cast. The Dutch broadsides swept the decks fore and aft before the Frenchmen had swung into place. Then the French guns opened a furious fire. The vigor of the storm of shot made the Dutch ships tremble and waver. Along the whole line the same impetuosity of attack filled the allies with fear and dismay. Half an hour after the action had begun, the Spanish vice-admiral cut his cables and drifted toward the shore.

The line had been opened, and the French returned to the attack with fresh energy. Two more flag-ships were forced to cut their cables, and others followed in the panic. Several ships ran aground; some took refuge behind the mole. Then the French let loose their fire-ships, and the wildest confusion took possession of the allies. Twelve men-of-war were burned, among them the Spanish and Dutch flag-ships. The Dutch admiral, Haan, and rear-admiral Van Middellandt and the Spanish admiral, De Ibarra, were killed or drowned in attempting to escape from their burning ships. The *Steenberg* and the *Capitane* blew up with a fearful explosion, and covered the bay and the neighboring ships with the burning débris. As the confusion of the mêlée increased, and the flames spread from ship to ship, consternation seized the allies. Struck with terror, Dutch and Spaniards fled for refuge behind the mole, and, amid fearful ravages, at-

tempted to escape from the burning balls and grenades which fell in showers on the city of Palermo.

The victory was brilliant and complete. The French were masters of the Mediterranean. Spain could no longer be counted as a great naval power, and the navy of Holland had been so reduced, and its strong leaders so decimated, that there was little hope of its reconstruction.

A short while after the decisive victory of Palermo, Tourville was taken seriously ill, and after struggling against a congestion of the lungs for some weeks, he yielded to the importunities of his friends and asked the minister of marine for leave of absence. We find him at this time generous to appreciate his inferiors, warm in his enthusiasm for his chief Du Quesne, just and outspoken in his judgment on the misconduct of even his superiors, rising above every motive of self-interest and personal gain; devoted in his patriotism and earnest in his desire to serve his country to the utmost of his powers. While his equals in birth and rank chafed and rebelled under the severe discipline, and were quick to criticise the rough manners, the boorishness, and difficult humor of Admiral Du Quesne, who was a plebeian by birth and a sailor by fortune, the aristocrat Tourville was always prompt to second his chief and to value him at his true worth. With these generous qualities of mind and heart, he was by no means indifferent

to the glory of renown and advancement. In his letter to the minister of marine, in which he is finally forced to admit the necessity of rest, he adds that he is eager to return to the fleet at the first possible opportunity, and that he will endeavor not to die a commodore.

About the first of February, 1677, Tourville returned to Toulon to oversee the equipment of the new ship that had been assigned him, the *Monarque*, but no further action of note took place before the signing of the treaty of peace between France and the allies.

The famous treaty of Nimègue, signed on the 10th of August, 1678, between Louis XIV on one side and half of Europe on the other, marked the beginning of that dazzling period of naval supremacy which, during almost fifteen years, placed France, for once in her history, at the head of maritime nations. The flag of every people saluted the standard that floated proudly from the masthead of the ships of France.

Peace on the water highways brought activity and constructive energy in the dockyards. Colbert and his son, the Marquis de Seignelay, who was to be his father's successor as minister of marine, projected vast improvements in harbor defences, roadstead facilities, in ship-building, and in fleet equipments.

The total number of war-ships in the French navy at this period had risen to two hundred and

nineteen classified vessels of all kinds, including one hundred and twenty ships of the line; besides these there were a large number of small unclassified craft which brought the list up to almost a thousand. But numbers were not all. Colbert's chief aim was progress and perfection in construction. At Versailles, under his eyes and those of the king, Tourville directed, in 1678, the building of a frigate according to a new design, a great improvement on the old, and even an advance on the British model. It was light, but was heavily armed. Merchant marine as well as military marine, commerce as well as war, received the careful attention of Colbert, and the next few years were devoted to strengthening the entire naval department.

Action on the waters, however, was soon to recommence. The commerce of Europe was again endangered by the piratical excursions of the Barbary Corsairs. To strike a severe blow to these enemies of trade, it was necessary to attack them in their main retreat. Algiers was the chief lair of the sea robbers. There they led their captured prizes, and fortified themselves in its ample harbor. There thousands of Christian captives languished in prison or in servitude. To maim or destroy this centre of piracy was the next project of Louis XIV.

The beautiful African city was to suffer a fearful punishment for the audacity of her buccaneer rulers. In the summer of 1682, and again in 1683,

a French fleet under Du Quesne and Tourville sailed into the harbor of Algiers, and among the heavy ships of the line could be seen for the first time several newly invented, small, flat-bottomed, bomb galiots, each of which carried two mortars and four guns.

Shells fell like rain upon the roofs of the city. Day and night the mortars plied their deadly missiles, and every minute a burning bomb swept through the air and exploded in the streets, doing fearful damage. Palaces and mosques fell in a mass of ruins; storehouses were destroyed, and houses crumbled to the ground. The city was a scene of wild confusion and disorder. Tourville, now lieutenant-general (vice-admiral), always at the post of danger, and first in every perilous enterprise, came and went in a small boat under an incessant fire from the forts to watch the work of the mortars.

Algiers sued for peace, but Du Quesne refused to listen to any overtures until all the French prisoners had been released from bondage. For five days there was silence on the bay and a respite in the city, while boat after boat came and went between the shore and the fleet. Seven hundred Christian slaves were restored to liberty. When the people of Algiers finally surrendered at discretion, and Tourville dictated the conditions of a treaty of peace, thirty-five hundred shells had levelled their city to the ground.

The famous peace of Nimègue did not long prevent a resumption of hostilities in Europe. Louis XIV and Charles II of Spain had not been able to reach an agreement on the question of concessions, and the Spanish king refused to give up certain possessions that had been included in the treaty. The misunderstandings between France and Spain had brought them to the verge of rupture, when the city of Genoa had the audacity or the imprudence to break her bond of neutrality, and not only to seek the protection of Spain, but to send several ships to her assistance. This open defiance of the power of the great monarch could not fail to provoke his ire. A fleet was at once ordered to sail from Mediterranean ports and to appear before Genoa. On the 17th of May, 1684, Du Quesne and Tourville arrived before the fair Italian city with a fleet of fourteen ships of the line, nineteen galleys, and ten mortar-boats. Then began a repetition of the scenes at Algiers. A storm of burning shells was hurled from the French mortars. More than thirteen thousand bombs poured upon the beautiful churches and palaces. The treasury, the arsenal, the storehouses, the docks, were completely destroyed.

Two land attacks were made, and Tourville, under a galling fire, led one of the detachments against the fort of San Pier d'Arena. The fort was carried, the walls razed to the ground, the whole suburb was captured and burned. Genoa

finally surrendered when her streets were mounds of wreckage and her inhabitants had reached the furthest limits of endurance.

Although Algiers had been punished and driven to submission, the Corsairs of Tripoli still swept the Mediterranean with their pirate galleys and carried off rich prizes and costly cargoes. Louis XIV could brook no defiance of his power, and Tripoli was condemned to the same revenge that had laid her sister city in ruins. A French fleet under Du Quesne and Tourville dropped anchor in front of the rebellious nest of buccaneers.

Tourville, to whose lot fell every hazardous undertaking, crept noiselessly into the harbor in a small boat, sounding as he went. Under the very shadow of the walls of Tripoli his little boat sped stealthily, passing from end to end of the bay. After a thorough examination of the port, and having found the best anchorage for the fleet, he returned without mishap, and on the following day the French ships were moored one mile from the city.

The entire charge of the operations was intrusted to Tourville. Night after night the fiery shells rained upon the bastions and the streets of Tripoli. Silence wrapped the city, and no sound was heard save the dull roar of the mortars and the deafening explosion of the bombs. But at last popular feeling was roused, and a cry went up for submission. Thus, in succession, the rebellious

cities of the Mediterranean were made to feel the implacable and iron power of the great monarch.

Tourville soon found himself greatly advanced in rank and influence. In 1689 he left the Order of Malta and was appointed vice-admiral of the Levant. The death of Du Quesne, in 1688, had raised him to the head of the navy, and a few years later he was given supreme command as marshal of France. This rapid promotion was due partly to his unquestioned ability and partly to the fact that he was thoroughly in sympathy with the policy of Seignelay, the minister of marine, and had been an active agent in carrying out that policy with brilliant and marked success. The Marquis de Seignelay, son of Colbert, the founder of the French navy, had devoted himself heart and soul to the great ambition of his life — that of making the French navy supreme in the waters of the Mediterranean. What Colbert and Seignelay planned, Du Quesne and Tourville accomplished. For this end French squadrons had fought and vanquished the Corsairs, Spain, Italy, and Holland — every nation, in fact, whose projects of naval extension and activity and whose interests in the Mediterranean interfered in any way with those of France. But the appetite for power grows with success, and, having realized his dreams of supremacy in the Mediterranean, Seignelay now meditated equal preponderance in the waters of the Atlantic.

Since 1672, when at Solebay the French and British fought together against the Dutch, there had been a reversal in European politics. A revolution in England had deposed the Catholic king, James II, and brought over from across the Channel William of Orange as temporary sovereign. Protestant Britain and Holland were therefore united by bonds of the closest alliance, in both religion and government. At this juncture Louis XIV espoused the cause of James, who had fled to France and was working for his own restoration to the British throne. The war which was declared in 1690 opened as a duel between the Catholic king, Louis XIV, as the supporter of James, and the Protestant king, William of Orange, as the representative of the Established Church of England. It ended in a coalition of Europe against the overweening ambition of France, or rather against the dynastic ambition of the French crown.

CHAPTER XIII

FRANCE SUPREME ON THE WAVES

THE interest of this war centres on the waters of the English Channel and in the great battle of Beachy Head, which forms the apogee of the short but dazzling triumph of the French navy. For a moment in history France won the supremacy of the seas. It was but a moment, and one that never returned. It came appropriately to increase the splendor of the reign of Louis XIV. It was in itself a superficial triumph dependent upon the energy, strong will, and well-conceived plans of Seignelay, and upon the courage and ability of Tourville.

On a day in June, 1690, from the seaport town of Brest, the combined French squadrons, under Tourville as commander-in-chief, crossed the Channel to the Lizard and passed along the coasts of Devonshire and Dorsetshire. As the fleet kept close to the shore, the British soldiers standing on the ramparts of Plymouth could easily watch the ships of France. Seventy men-of-war, many carrying more than fifty guns, led by the *Soleil Royal*, the admiral's flag-ship, went slowly on in

quest of the British fleet. The ships of Great Britain lay in the Downs. The Dutch contingent had joined them. Admiral Herbert, Lord Torrington, a man of great personal courage but of wilful and obstinate temper and of jealous disposition, had been placed at the head of the combined squadrons. It was near the rocks of the Isle of Wight that the hostile fleets took up their positions. The allies were inferior in numbers, having fifty-nine ships of the line beside fifty-three lesser vessels; but the combination of the two greatest naval powers of Europe was supposed to outweigh in quality what it lacked in quantity.

It was therefore to the dismay of the central government that Admiral Torrington began a retreating movement toward the Straits of Dover. Scarcely had he reached Beachy Head, halfway to the Straits, when he received orders from headquarters to fight the enemy. Tourville, on his side, had also been instructed to find the British fleet and destroy it. On both sides there was no alternative but obedience. Yet both of the hostile admirals disapproved of the decision of their governments, and the difference in the character of the two men came out at this juncture. Tourville overcame his annoyance, and, putting the love of country first, decided to fight his best at any cost. Torrington carried his self-love and resentment into battle, and, while the "fate of three kingdoms" hung on his conduct, he held

aloof from the engagement, keeping only within long range and leaving the Dutch squadron unsupported.

Under Admiral Evertsen the brave Hollanders, who had been placed in the van and given the signal to engage, bore down full sail upon the French vanguard. Even the contemporary records of France give testimony to the gallant stand of the Dutch squadron and the courage with which they upheld the honor of their country. Caught between the fire of the French vanguard and of the centre commanded by Tourville, they bore for eight hours the ceaseless and violent cannonading that swept away their masts and rigging and did deadly work among the men. At last the unequal contest ended in the complete annihilation of the Dutch squadron. The mutilated ships ran aground on the coast and were burned by the enemy. Fifteen vessels were sunk or blown up, and of these only two were British. Torrington, after basely leaving his allies to their fate, gave the signal for retreat, and as darkness came to cover his movements he fled with his ships along the coast of Kent and took refuge in the Thames, pulling up the buoys as he went and putting out the beacons along the banks, thus making it impossible for the French, who were without pilots, to follow in pursuit.

The day of Tourville's victory was a day of sorrow and ignominy for London. Terror spread

throughout the city. The danger of invasion and revolution grew hourly more alarming. If Tourville's professional daring had been equal to his personal courage, he would now have taken greater risks and won larger triumphs. Braving the shoals of the Thames, he would have set fire to the shipping and destroyed the remnants of the enemy's fleet. Then London itself would have been at his mercy. But while he was fearless in danger, he was cautious under responsibility, and this prudence brought upon him severe criticism. He was called by Seignelay, "brave of heart, coward of head."

The impetuous minister of marine was impatient for an invasion of the Thames. He had also made extensive plans for a series of descents upon the ports on the southern and western shores of England and along the coast of Ireland on St. George's Channel, for the purpose of burning and destroying the shipping. He now tried to urge Tourville into more energetic measures, but the commander-in-chief contented himself with ranging the Channel and burning the little maritime town of Teignmouth. The sight of the French ships under their very cliffs roused the entire population from end to end of Devonshire, of Dorsetshire, and Sussex. In twenty-four hours thousands of raw recruits had assembled, forming a tumultuous but enthusiastic army, ready to defend their shores at all odds. Tourville was soon persuaded that an attempt on

the coast would be useless, and, standing out to sea, he turned his fleet toward France.

This had been in July. In the next November Seignelay died, and with him passed away the short-lived glory of the French navy. His successor, Pontchartrain, was a man ignorant, incompetent, and injudicious. A faulty administration soon brought about the defeat and decline of the marine which had given so fair a promise under the two Colberts. The first and most disastrous result of this change at headquarters was the terrible defeat of La Hogue.

In 1692 a new descent on Great Britain was projected by Louis XIV and James II. It was to be the final blow to the throne of William of Orange. The entire winter was spent in preparations. A large army of thirty thousand men, encamped on the coast of Normandy, was in readiness for James to place himself at its head. Five hundred transports lay at Cherbourg and Havre to carry the troops across the Channel and effect a landing on the coast of England. Tourville, commanding the Atlantic squadron of fifty ships of the line, had orders to leave Brest and protect the transportation of the troops; then, after having been reënforced by the squadron of the Mediterranean, to engage the enemy wherever and whatever he might be. The utmost confidence was felt in the success of the enterprise. A large part of the British fleet, it was expected, would desert to King James,

and it was also hoped that a great body of the people would rally around their former sovereign when once he had set foot on British soil. The restoration of the Stuart dynasty seemed a matter of certainty. Theoretically the plans were good. Practically they were brought to naught by bad weather, the activity of the allies, and the obstinacy of the French minister.

The French squadron of the Mediterranean was imprisoned in the Straits of Gibraltar by a severe tempest, and never reached the scene of action. Tourville was detained by contrary winds at Brest. Meanwhile, unknown to the French government, a Dutch squadron of thirty-six ships of the line had appeared in the Downs and effected a junction with the British. It was the most powerful fleet ever assembled in the Channel — almost a hundred war-ships, manned by forty thousand men, and carrying more than seven thousand guns. The whole of this force was under the command of Admiral Russell, who had received orders from the government to find and fight the enemy. On the 17th of May, 1692, this great armament headed for the French coast.

Tourville, with a squadron of only forty ships and twenty thousand men, had already left Brest and was on his way to La Hogue to escort the transports. The two armaments came in sight of each other off the Cape of Barfleur. The dispro-

portion in numbers was immense. The French counted less than one-half in vessels, men, and guns. It seemed madness to engage the enemy. But Tourville had received orders to fight, and he obeyed. He had been allowed no freedom of action, and besides he did not wish to lay himself open again to the charge of overcaution. At noon, on the 17th of May, the two fleets were formed in line of battle, and the French bore down full sail on the long stretch of the enemy's armament with a daring which surprised even the allies.

From the first the *Soleil Royal*, Tourville's flagship, engaged the *Britannia*, from whose masthead the flag of Admiral Russell was flying. The duel between the two vessels was long and desperate. The guns were equal, but it soon became evident that the men behind the guns were superior on the side of the British, the aim was surer, the service faster, the guns in better condition. But Tourville fought daringly and well, and the gallant old *Soleil Royal*, the finest vessel in the world, after upholding the honor of the white flag with a courage and tenacity acknowledged even by his opponents, surrounded by six vessels of the enemy and sustaining a galling fire, was towed off at sunset like a great wounded giant, and the admiral's colors were transferred to the *Ambitieux*. For five hours the struggle went on. The British lost two vessels, the French not

one. Then, when night fell, under cover of a fog, the French spread their sails and retreated for shelter to the coast.

Thus far it had been an honorable defeat. The French had engaged an adversary of more than double their strength and had not lost a ship. Had there been a Thames behind him, Tourville could have saved his fleet, and the glory would have almost equalled that of a victory. But along that entire coast there was not a naval port where he could find refuge. So the retreat turned into a flight, and the whole fleet of the enemy followed in hot pursuit. The smaller French vessels made for the treacherous Race of Alderney, between the Channel Isles and the French coast, where shoals and rocks and boiling eddies made shipwreck almost certain. It was the plunge of despair, but the twenty ships that took it reached St. Malo uninjured, and the British dared not follow on the dangerous trail.

The larger vessels, among them the *Soleil Royal* and the *Ambitieux*, headed for Cherbourg and La Hogue, where they were run aground on the beach and dismantled. There the British chased them to their very sands, and set fire to the unrigged and anchorless hulks. Fourteen were burned, and for miles the coast was illumined by the flames under the very eyes of James II.

The cause of the British king was lost; but, more important still for France, the supremacy

of the sea passed from her grasp, never to return. Still the French navy was not annihilated. It had wonderful recuperative power. The famous privateers of St. Malo and Dunkirk, Jean Bart and his confederates, infested the Channel and captured several thousand of the British merchantmen. A year after La Hogue, Tourville showed England that she was not yet undisputed "mistress of the sea." The French fleet, with surprising alacrity, had been rebuilt and refitted. France still took the palm for speed in construction. Almost a hundred ships of the line were ready to take the sea.

Tourville, at the head of this fleet, slipped unnoticed from the road of Brest and, passing along the coast of Portugal, lay in hiding in the bay of Lagos. He was determined to revenge La Hogue, and his prey was to be the immense Smyrna fleet of merchantmen bound for the Mediterranean. This fleet, the largest ever gathered in British waters, lay at Portsmouth waiting for her Anglo-Dutch escort. There were British, Dutch, and Flemish merchant ships bound for the marts of the Levant — four hundred sail in all, a dense forest of masts and rigging. In May, 1693, they stood out to sea on their way to the Straits of Gibraltar. Tourville was supposed to be lying at Brest, and the larger part of the Anglo-Dutch escort anchored off the island of Ushant to prevent him from coming out and attacking either the British coast or

the merchant fleet. Little did they dream that they were guarding an empty harbor.

In June the Smyrna fleet reached the southern point of Portugal. As it rounded Cape St. Vincent, Tourville sailed out of Lagos Bay. The surprise was complete. Admiral Rooke, at the head of the small escort squadron, retreated hurriedly to the open sea. The merchant fleet was abandoned to its fate. Ship after ship was burned by the French. The whole sea was wrapped in flames. A part of the merchantmen fled to Cadiz, others attempted to pass through the Straits. Tourville followed even as far as Gibraltar and Malaga, and completed the work of destruction. A hundred ships paid the penalty of the Frenchman's revenge. This blow to British and Dutch commerce was deep and far-reaching. They had expected large profits; they had reaped enormous losses. And the hurt to their pride was no less great. The large escort fleet that had watched outside the empty harbor of Brest, while cargoes worth millions of pounds sterling were being destroyed by the enemy, was received with jeers on its return to England.

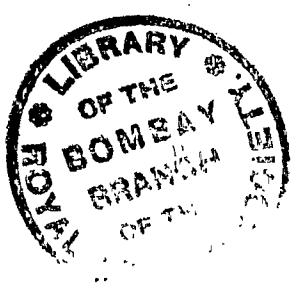
This fearful reprisal was almost the last of the notable services that Tourville rendered to France. The cautious policy of Pontchartrain replaced great naval battles by privateering and attacks on the enemy's trade, and the broader powers of the hero of Beachy Head were left without scope.

He continued to serve in the Mediterranean, but we do not hear of him in any important enterprise. After the famous peace of Ryswick, in 1697, he was obliged, by ill health, to retire for a time from active service and live on his own estates. When the war of the Spanish succession broke out in 1700, he was made commander-in-chief of the joint naval forces of France and Spain in the Mediterranean; but his death in 1701 followed close upon his new appointment.

Tourville's knowledge of the sea extended over a wide field; he was familiar with every detail of his profession. He was able as a tactician, he added to the art of signalling, and naval science owed to him a regular *corpus* of the principles of tactics. He was the greatest, with the exception of Suffren, and undoubtedly the most brilliant of the admirals of France; and it was his good fortune to have been at the head of the French navy at the moment of its supremacy.

VICE-ADMIRAL DE SUFFREN
SAINT-TROPEZ

1726–1788



VICE-ADMIRAL DE SUFFREN SAINT-TROPEZ

CHAPTER XIV

THE SCHOOLING OF A SEAMAN

If greatness were measured by the rule of success and brilliant achievement, Suffren could not lay claim to his acknowledged title of being the most distinguished seaman of France. He won no world-famed victory, and for this reason, perhaps, his name has been less widely known outside the limits of his own country than that of any other illustrious naval commander in history. No dazzling results crowned his active career as a fighter, yet in genius, skill, resolution, practical knowledge, and clear judgment he was unsurpassed by any officer in the French navy. His power was greater than his performance, and this because he was forced to work with imperfect tools and to struggle not only against material obstacles, but against moral opposition and an incomplete destiny. His career lacked the grouping of every element of success; circumstances, instead of being his allies, were his foes. That he accomplished

so much in the face of the heavy handicap of fortune is the proof of his genius.

Early in the eighteenth century the noble French family of Suffren lived in the castle of St. Cannat on their ancestral estate in Provence. The Marquis de Suffren had several sons, the youngest of whom, Pierre André, was to be later known as the Bailli de Suffren Saint-Tropez. Pierre André, who was born in 1726, was early destined to enter the French navy and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, an accepted career for many of the younger sons of noble French families. When he was seventeen he was admitted to the service of King Louis XV, and was sent to Toulon for his naval schooling.

Suffren had entered upon the stage at a period of almost uninterrupted ferment and hostile activity in European politics. It was a time when the training of future officers was not carried on deliberately and systematically in the interesting retreat of a naval academy. It was won by experience on the decks of men-of-war among the rude chances of actual battle. Thrown almost at once into the midst of active service, Pierre André learned the rudiments of the seaman's calling as a cadet on board the *Solide*, a 64-gun ship, one of the Toulon fleet. His chief, La Bruyère de Court, was the first to fly his flag in the war of 1744, between France and Great Britain, and under him Suffren took part in the action off Toulon against Admiral Matthews.

His second naval experience in the same year was an exciting one — the notorious duel between the *Mars* and the *Northumberland*, off the Scilly Isles. Swept by the artillery of the *Mars*, her machinery riddled, her rigging torn, her captain wounded, and two-thirds of her crew killed, the *Northumberland* finally surrendered, and was carried in triumph to Brest. This first year of Suffren's sea service closed off Martinique, in the Caribbean Sea, where he took part on the *Pauline* in the action between Captain Macnamara and four British men-of-war.

Suffren's career had opened in the heat of battle; it was to continue through a long future of almost uninterrupted activity on the sea. During the next forty-four years he was to fight on high and narrow seas, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, from the Caribbean Sea to the Indian Ocean. His wide range of experience was to carry him from the shores of France to those of Canada, from Morocco to the West Indies, from Malta to the United States, from South Africa to India.

In 1746 Suffren was exchanged to the *Trident*, one of a squadron of seven ships of the line and three frigates under the command of the Duke d'Anville. Early in June this little squadron put to sea with secret orders to sail for Cape Breton and recapture the French settlement that had fallen into the hands of the British. But misfortune followed the expedition from the start.

The squadron lacked water and fresh provisions, fierce winds and storms delayed her on her course, and a virulent scurvy devastated the crews. Although Nova Scotia was finally reached, all attempt against Cape Breton was renounced, and the squadron headed for home ports. But British ships were cruising in the waters of the Atlantic, and many of the unfortunate Frenchmen fell a prey to their foes. One by one the remnant found their way across the ocean, buffeted by the winds, harassed by the enemy's ships, and scattered over the waters. Among the few that returned to France in safety was Suffren's ship, the *Trident*.

In the following year, 1747, Suffren was advanced to the rank of ensign, and transferred to the *Monarque*, a 74-gun ship in the squadron of Commodore l'Etenduère. France at this time was sending out frequent convoys of merchandise to her colonies in the West Indies under the protection of small squadrons of men-of-war. It fell to the lot of L'Etenduère to act as escort, with his eight ships of the line and two frigates, to one of these large merchant fleets. The merchantmen, numbering two hundred and fifty-two sail, put to sea in the month of October, from the Straits of La Rochelle. But a British fleet of fourteen ships of the line, three frigates, and three fire-ships, under Rear-admiral Hawke, was lying off Cape Finisterre in waiting for the long line of richly laden vessels. Allowing them to pass ahead, the British

admiral then followed in hot pursuit, and fell upon their unprotected rear.

L'Etenduère at once ordered his convoy to hoist all sail and fly before the enemy, while he gathered together his ships, and made signal to form in line of battle and open fire. The odds were heavy against him, more than double in favor of the British. His flag-ship was almost immediately surrounded by six of his opponent's vessels, and on all quarters the battle raged furiously. Four of the French rearguard, among them the *Monarque*, fought desperately against several opponents, and after four hours of obstinate resistance, raked fore and aft, dismasted and shattered, their captains killed or wounded, they were forced to surrender. Suffren, who had fought throughout the battle with conspicuous coolness and bravery, thus found himself a prisoner in the hands of the enemy.

But his captivity was not a long one. He was exchanged after a few months, and returned to France shortly before the treaty of peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was signed in October, 1748. His services being no longer needed at home, he took advantage of the cessation of hostilities to go to Malta, where he was received as a knight of the Order of St. John. During the next six years he took part in the obligatory cruises of the knights against their hereditary enemies, the African and Turkish pirates, who constantly infested the waters of the Mediterranean.

France and Great Britain, although nominally at peace, had continued in an illegal and piratical way to annoy and injure each other's trade. Reprisals and unauthorized attacks continued in growing force until the year 1756, when a formal declaration of war between the two countries reopened regular hostilities. Suffren, who had returned to France the year before, and had been raised to the rank of lieutenant, was among the first to take part in the new campaign.

French dockyards were teeming with activity; fifteen new ships of war were built and armed with marvellous rapidity, and the ocean ports swarmed with troops. The present object of French enterprise was an island in the Mediterranean, the key to Toulon.

The island of Minorca — a sentinel of British commerce on the highway to the Levant — formed a convenient arsenal and coaling station for British ships. Its possession was of inestimable value to Great Britain and a constant menace to France. The expedition planned by the French government was, therefore, of no small importance to her naval interests. From the islands of Hyères a French fleet of twelve ships of the line, five frigates, and a hundred and fifty transports set sail on the 12th of April, 1756. La Galissonière commanded the expedition, and Suffren as lieutenant served on one of the smaller ships of the line, the *Orphée*, of sixty-four guns.

After a sail of five days La Galissonière, skilfully evading a British squadron that had been sent to intercept him, reached the shores of Minorca and hurriedly landed the troops. Shortly after, when the British ships were signalled in the offing, he was prepared to meet the enemy. As the opposing vanguards opened fire, the French presented a strong and compact front that resisted with decision every effort to break it. The British ships, on the contrary, were swept fore and aft, and their guns soon silenced by the raking broadsides of Commodore Glandenez and his division.

Confusion took possession of the British line. Admiral Byng strove to restore order and to close with the French rear, but he was unsupported by his division. Three of his disabled ships, in attempting to escape, became entangled in the flag-ship. La Galissonière's heavy broadsides completed the rout; there was no choice except flight.

Hoisting all sail, the remnants of Byng's shattered squadron headed for Gibraltar and took refuge under the guns of the fortress. The court-martial and execution of Admiral Byng, the capture of Mahon, and conquest of the entire island of Minorca were the direct results of this naval victory.

In the following year Suffren was transferred to the *Ocean*, of eighty guns, the flag-ship of Commo-

dore de la Clue, and took part in the campaign of 1758–1759, which proved so disastrous to French arms.

Early in 1759 the government of Versailles made extensive plans for a descent upon the coast of Great Britain. Active preparations were made throughout the ports of France. Hundreds of flatboats were constructed for the transport of troops, forty battalions were collected in Brittany, another army corps camped at Dunkirk. Two fleets were formed,—one at Toulon under De la Clue, another at Brest under Vice-admiral Conflans. To prevent the junction of these fleets, Admiral Boscawen had been ordered to blockade the Toulon force, but a sudden and violent storm drove his ships toward Gibraltar. De la Clue seized this opportunity to steal swiftly out of harbor and to attempt the passage of the Straits. In the inky darkness of the night, under a driving wind, the *Ocean* led the way with her signal light at the stern.

A part of De la Clue's squadron found its way through the narrow waters, but five of the French ships and three frigates had been swept by the terrific gale out of sight of the *Ocean's* beacon. At early dawn on the 17th of August, near Cape Santa Maria, De la Clue sighted the whole British fleet bearing down upon him, and rapidly gaining on his slow-sailing ships. With a force fourteen to seven the British admiral fell upon his adver-

sary. De la Clue made a vigorous but hopeless resistance.

The duel between the two flag-ships was terrific. Boscawen threw himself with crowded sail upon his rival until within musket shot. His first broadsides almost completely unrigged the *Ocean*, tore her sails to shreds, and cut her mainmast. But disabled as she was, she answered the attack bravely, and the unswerving aim of her fire left the masts, yards, and sails of the Englishman a mass of wreckage. Boscawen retreated in amazement and did not venture to renew the duel, but De la Clue's courageous defence was of no avail. Mortally wounded in the thigh, he left the command of his ship to Captain Carné, and together with the few remnants of the squadron drifted toward Lagos on the coast of Portugal. Pursued, even under the guns of a neutral port, two of the French ships were captured and two others burned. Among the prisoners was Suffren, who, for the second time, found himself a British captive.

Suffren was now thirty-three years of age. He had already spent sixteen of those years in almost uninterrupted sea service, he had been twice a prisoner, and he had fought in repeated engagements. Thus far his promotion had been slow, he was still only a lieutenant, but he was soon to rise more swiftly. We cannot follow in detail every step of this rise; twenty years were to pass before he was to reach an independent command of

importance. Although no brilliant event marks this long period of his schooling, these years of preparation were of inestimable value in the training of his ability and the formation of his character. They were years full of varied incident; they gave him a proficiency that only practical experience could teach; they helped to develop that coolness under danger, that keenness of judgment, and that unswerving determination which later made him the hero of the Indian Ocean.

Suffren had returned to France after his captivity, but was given no new employ before the peace of 1763. He was then assigned to the command of the *Caméléon*, a small vessel sent to cruise in the Mediterranean against the Algerine and Morocco pirates. In 1767 he received his commission as commander, and in 1772 one as captain. Four years of active work under the Maltese flag, which earned him the grade of commander in the Order of St. John, and several cruises in eastern waters as commander of the *Mignonne* and the *Alcmène*, filled the ten years between 1767 and 1777.

Early in 1778 was signed at Versailles the memorable Treaty of Alliance that publicly recognized American independence and secured the support of France in our struggle for freedom. Two months later a French fleet under the command of Vice-admiral d'Estaing set sail from the harbor of Toulon. Its destination had been kept so com-

plete a secret that not until it was flying under full sail across the Atlantic did Great Britain realize its true mission. Twelve ships of the line, of fifty to ninety guns, and five frigates were heading for America, and commanding the *Fantasque*, a 64-gun ship, was Suffren, who had been appointed to her early in 1777.

The object of the expedition was to assist, by a sudden and well-directed attack, in the destruction of British naval forces on the coast of North America; but as far as the United States were concerned, it ended merely in a sympathetic demonstration by the French fleet. D'Estaing had left Toulon on the 19th of April; hampered by two slow-sailing ships he was kept in mid-ocean for almost three months. When he reached the Delaware River, on the 7th of July, he found that Lord Howe had retreated to Sandy Hook and anchored his fleet in water too shallow for the large French ships to enter. D'Estaing, in the presence of his assembled captains, offered a reward of a hundred and fifty thousand francs to any American pilot who would lead his fleet into New York harbor. All refused to risk the passage of the bar.

Disappointed in his hope of destroying the British fleet, D'Estaing sailed down the coast to Newport, where he was soon followed by Lord Howe. When the British admiral appeared in the offing, D'Estaing sailed out to meet him, but

Howe evaded a combat, and a sudden squall separated the adversaries. Foiled in his repeated attempts to fight the enemy, the French commander shaped his course northward and dropped anchor in the harbor of Boston.

Appointed by Louis XVI military governor of the Windward Isles, in the Caribbean Sea, D'Estaing set sail for Martinique toward the close of 1778, and remained on that station for a year. After an unsuccessful attempt to recapture the island of Santa Lucia, that had fallen into the hands of the British, the French admiral determined to make an attack on Grenada, one of the Windward group, where for sixteen years the British had been strongly intrenched.

On the morning of the 2d of July, 1779, the French fleet, now numbering twenty-five ships of the line and fifteen frigates, appeared before the town and anchored above the forts. Sixteen hundred troops were at once landed and preparations made to storm the two powerful forts that protected the town and the roadstead. At eleven o'clock at night, under a heavy fire, three French columns made an impetuous assault, carried the palisade, climbed the precipitous cliff, forced the barricades, captured the batteries, cut down the British flag, and ran up the white standard of France. This had been the work of two hours. When the light of morning dawned, D'Estaing ordered one of the British guns on the Hospital cliff to be

turned onto Fort Royal. The first shot brought an offer to capitulate from Lord Macartney, governor of Grenada, and within a few hours the whole British garrison surrendered at discretion.

On the day following this brilliant capture, news came to D'Estaing of the approach of Admiral Byron, and on the morning of the 6th of July the entire British fleet were seen bearing down under press of sail. The French promptly formed in line of battle to receive the shock of the attack. The *Fantasque* found herself at the rear, but Suffren with skilful celerity passed to the head of the line and became the leading ship. In this position he received, for more than an hour, the full brunt of the broadsides from twenty-one British men-of-war. When the enemy had passed ahead of the *Fantasque*, Suffren returned to his post in the line of battle and for the second time exposed himself to the galling fire of the opposing line. His vessel was fearfully damaged, masts and sails were cut and rent, many of the crew were wounded, but his well-directed fire still swept the enemy's decks. The British suffered heavy losses. As night closed in, Admiral Byron retired from the scene of action, and the French cast anchor in the road of Grenada.

On Suffren's return from the Caribbean Sea he was received in France with every mark of esteem and appreciation, and being appointed to the *Zélé*, a 74-gun ship, he joined early in 1780 the com-

bined Franco-Spanish fleet cruising off Cadiz. On the 9th of August, near Cape St. Vincent, the allies fell in with a large and valuable British convoy, under the escort of Captain Moutray. The swift attack, the pursuit, the capture, was the work of a few hours. Suffren alone took twelve British prizes, and was the first to lead in the chase of Captain Moutray. But the fast-sailing British frigates and the ship *Ramillies* kept far ahead of their pursuers, and Suffren was finally forced to give up the race. The capture of almost the entire British convoy was, however, an ample reward to the French and a severe blow to their opponents.

CHAPTER XV

ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

THE past had been preparation and slow promotion: thirty-seven years of subordinate service. The future was to be achievement and swift advance: seven years of independent command. On these seven years rests the fame of Suffren.

In 1781 Suffren was appointed to the *Héros*, a 74-gun ship, and was placed in command of five ships of the line and a number of transports, bound for the Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean.

Early in the year the French government had learned, through secret agencies, of a proposed attack by the British on the Dutch settlement at the Cape. Commodore Johnstone had been intrusted with the mission of taking possession of the colony, and was about to make sail from Portsmouth harbor with five ships and a convoy of troops under his command. Suffren received orders to sail simultaneously from Brest to warn and assist the Dutch, and if possible to reach the Cape in advance of his rival. It so happened that Johnstone had a start of several days, for Suffren could not sail until the 22d of March, and even

then he was burdened by a large number of sick among his crews. After a run of about three weeks the Cape Verd Islands were sighted. One of the French ships, the *Artésien*, needing water, Suffren decided to take the whole squadron into Port Praya, and revictual with fresh provisions, of which he was in great want.

At dawn, on the morning of the 16th of April, the French squadron was heading for St. Jago, when the *Artésien* ran up the signal, "Enemy's ships at anchor." This, then, was Johnstone's squadron, and the meeting was to take place before either of them had reached the Cape.

For a moment Suffren weighed the chances and then decided on an immediate attack. It had the advantage of a surprise. The British ships were carelessly moored in the bay; thoughtless of danger, a part of the men had been sent ashore for water and provisions.

Having signalled his division to prepare for action, and the two belated ships, the *Sphinx* and the *Vengeur*, to join him under press of sail, Suffren took the lead and stood into the bay. Soon the signal, "Enemy in sight," was flying from the masthead of one of the British ships, and the absent men were hastily recalled. "Up all hammocks" and "Heave anchor" came in quick succession, as Suffren's flag-ship the *Héros* bore down under full sail with reckless audacity. The French commander did not pause to see

whether his division could follow him, and the *Annibal* alone succeeded in taking up a position in the midst of the enemy's line alongside his chief. The unfortunate *Artésien* became entangled in a transport and drifted out to sea. The *Sphinx* and the *Vengeur* never reached the scene of action. Two French ships thus found themselves alone and unsupported in the face of five British ships of the line, three frigates, a large number of transports, and the forts of the town.

Port Praya belonged to Portugal and was a neutral harbor. This had not deterred Suffren from acting on the offensive, for he remembered Lagos and was determined to repay the British for their own disregard of neutral rights. But, as an answer to his indifference or his audacity, the guns of the Portuguese batteries were turned upon him. Surrounded on all sides by the enemy, exposed to the fire of batteries ashore and afloat, the two devoted French ships were riddled with shot. Dismasted, with shrouds shot away, and rigging in hopeless disorder, they still kept their stand. After an heroic struggle Suffren saw the futility of continuing the fight without the support of his other ships, and, cutting his cables, he drifted out to sea with his consort.

Commodore Johnstone, after a few hours, followed the retreating ships out of the bay. Suffren promptly formed in line of battle and waited for the enemy. But from timidity or indecision

Johnstone hauled to the wind, and toward evening retreated to the bay. Suffren, with his damaged ships, hoisted sail for the Cape of Good Hope, the *Annibal*, entirely dismasted and as "bare as a hulk," being taken in tow by the *Sphinx*.

On the 18th of June the French squadron doubled the Cape, and three days later cast anchor in Simon's Bay. Johnstone followed in their wake a month afterward, too late to attempt anything against the colony at the Cape. Warned by Suffren of their danger, the colonists had thrown up defences and strengthened the fortifications of the town. Johnstone, having failed in his mission, returned to England in June, and Suffren spread sail for the Isle de France with the pennant of commodore flying at his masthead. Before leaving France Suffren had received the order to assume acting rank as commodore after passing the Cape of Good Hope. When the news of his courageous action at Port Praya reached Paris, the minister of marine sent him his commission as commodore; but he failed to receive it until February, 1783, almost two years later, in the roadstead of Trincomalee.

Since the beginning of the war with Great Britain French naval interests in the Indian Ocean had been left in lifeless and incompetent hands. There had been neither energy nor understanding in the conduct of the campaign. During Captain Tronjolly's command France had lost Pondicherry, the last of her possessions on the Indian coast. His

successor, Count d'Orves, had accomplished nothing beyond a fruitless demonstration off Coromandel. A more audacious commander might have dealt a severe blow to Britain's power in Hindustan, for a grave peril was at that time threatening her from within.

Hyder-Aly, the most powerful of the native chiefs and the implacable enemy of Great Britain, had led a successful rising in Bengal and along the coast of Malabar and Coromandel. Many of the principal towns in southern India had fallen before his victorious army. Crafty, warlike, and skilful, a keen politician as well as an energetic soldier, the nabob of Maissour planned nothing less than to chase the British from the whole of the Indian peninsula. The support of the French seemed to him the best furtherance of his project, and he was eager to secure their coöperation in a land attack on Pondicherry. But Commodore d'Orves urged the necessity of his immediate return to the Isle de France, and on the 31st of March, 1781, he again cast anchor in the roadstead of Port Louis. Seven months later Suffren stood into the harbor with his division, and a large supply of arms and provisions.

The task of refitting Suffren's damaged squadron was carried on with a vigor and determination strange to the dilatory ways of the Indian station. The spirit of the new commander made itself felt throughout the fleet. By right of seniority Suffren held a position subordinate to that of Commodore

d'Orves, but his bold initiative and force could not fail to influence his surroundings. In less than two months after his arrival the entire fleet weighed anchor and stood out to sea. Soon after leaving Port Louis the French ships, which now numbered eleven ships of the line and six smaller vessels, fell in with and captured a British man-of-war. The prize was manned with a French crew, and took its place in the fleet, thus bringing the number of ships of the line up to twelve.

Soon after this the command of the fleet fell to Suffren. For some time his chief had been suffering from ill health, and on the 9th of February, in mid-sea, he died, leaving the duties and responsibilities of commander to his younger and more resolute successor. Suffren, who had at last reached the position in which he could act independently, with his characteristic energy and decision headed at once for Madras.

On the 14th of February the lookout frigate, *Fine*, signalled nine vessels of the enemy in the roadstead of Madras. Sir Edward Hughes lay at anchor with his fleet, strongly moored under the batteries of the forts. Contrary winds and the powerful position of the British ships discouraged Suffren from making the sudden attack that he had planned. Being seconded by his senior officers in his decision not to risk a battle, he made signal to hoist sail for Pondicherry, which had recently been captured by the natives. There it was his

intention to land the troops from the transports and enter into relations with Hyder-Aly.

Sailing southward along the coast, with his convoy between the fleet and the shore, Suffren kept on his course throughout the night of the 16th of February. When the mists of the morning had cleared, the French commander saw with amazement that Sir Edward Hughes had slipped out of harbor and had crept between the shore and the convoy. Already the British had seized several prizes and spread consternation among the transports. Hastening to the rescue of his convoy, Suffren formed in line of battle and opened fire on the rear of the British. His dispositions were skilfully made. He began the attack on the last British vessel and carried it as far as the sixth, thus leaving three British vessels useless, and making it a contest of twelve against six. He had every right to expect a brilliant issue.

Had all the captains of Suffren's fleet fought with the same determination as their chief, the battle would probably have ended in a decisive victory. But five out of the twelve senior officers — whether from irresolution or misunderstanding or from direct insubordination — failed to act with promptness and vigor. The signals from the flagship were disregarded, the order to take up positions within close range was not followed, and four of the ships kept at so great a distance from the centre of action that their futile shots never reached

the enemy. The battle opened so late in the afternoon that Suffren could not correct the mistakes in the manœuvres, and unsupported by a part of his fleet it was impossible for him to carry out his well-devised tactics.

It was four o'clock when the *Héros*, Suffren's flag-ship, led the attack, and for two hours and a half she poured a storm of shot into the enemy's vessels. Ably seconded by the *Flamand* and the *Brillant*, she succeeded in doing severe damage to the British squadron. The *Exeter* was a mass of wreckage, "like a shipwrecked vessel," as Admiral Hughes expressed it; the *Superb* was badly treated and had five feet of water in her hold. At half-past six o'clock, seeing that his orders were not carried out, and the variable winds of the Bay of Bengal having again turned against him, Suffren retired to long range, and kept up a distant cannonading until darkness covered the scene.

That Suffren was discontented, and justly so, with his laggard captains is not surprising, since they lost him a victory. For a moment he had the thought of sending them back to France, but among the subalterns there would be no better men to fill the vacant places, and he was forced by circumstances to retain them. With De Tromelin, the senior captain, he was especially annoyed, for it was his duty to see that the orders from the flag-ship were executed.

"Being at the head of the line," writes Suffren, "I could not see what was happening behind. I had instructed M. de Tromelin to make signals to the ships near him; but all he did was to repeat my signals without seeing that they were carried out." This lack of concerted action in the fleet, the sullen opposition of a number of his senior officers, the cowardice of others, and the stupidity of most were some of the serious obstacles against which Suffren was to struggle throughout the whole of this campaign.

CHAPTER XVI

STRUGGLING AGAINST ODDS

WHEN Suffren drew his ships out of the fire on the evening of the 17th of February, it was with the intention of re-forming his line and renewing the fight on the following morning. But when light dawned the British had disappeared. Their ships had suffered too severely to attempt a second engagement, and Sir Edward Hughes had made sail for Trincomalee. The French, on their side, were in no condition to pursue the enemy. Suffren chose rather to continue his course to Pondicherry. Two days later he cast anchor in the harbor.

It was important, at this juncture, to sound the feelings of Hyder-Aly, and, if possible, to win his close alliance. Without this alliance no serious action could be undertaken in the Bengal waters. The indifference and inability of former French commanders on the Oriental station had alienated the bellicose Indian chief. He had begun the campaign with ardor and with a sincere desire to aid the French. But the vacillation of his allies combined with British diplomacy had persuaded him into a purely defensive attitude. The

British general was already winning victories over the native armies. Advantageous offers of peace were being offered the Sultan by the East India Company, and Hyder-Aly was on the point of accepting them. He had lost faith in the French, and had given up all thought of uniting their interests to his own. It was a critical moment in Indian affairs. Suffren was determined to win back the support of Hyder-Aly, and through him that of the weaker Indian princes.

The fleet was moored at Porto-Novo, and a deputation was sent to the nabob to propose the terms of an agreement. Suffren's resolute attitude strengthened the waning friendship of Hyder-Aly, and the result of the conference was satisfactory. The French promised to land troops to reenforce the Indian army, and in return the native chief agreed to consider this foreign army corps as a separate and independent body, to be maintained at his expense. He also consented to supply the French fleet with provisions whenever it was anchored off the coast within reach of his camp, and to furnish Suffren with money to carry on the campaign.

The French commander had shown himself a diplomat as well as a naval strategist. He had secured for himself the means of revictualling his fleet on a coast where the French possessed neither ports nor storehouses, and of wintering within reach of the enemy, instead of being forced by lack of

provisions to return to the Isle de France. He could now turn his energies to repairing his damaged ships and seeking the British fleet, for he was firmly resolved not to leave the coast until he had again measured himself with his rival. Writing to the minister of marine, he says:—

"I am firmly resolved not to leave the coast. Unless it is absolutely impossible for the squadron to remain, either from unfitness or lack of provisions, we shall not abandon the coast. I have promised the nabob this, and shall keep my word."

He adds an appeal for more men, sailors for himself, and soldiers for Hyder-Aly. "The fleet is short of almost six hundred men. I bought thirty Kaffirs at Tranquebar, and am trying to engage Lascars, but these are only makeshifts."

Meanwhile the troops were landed and the worst damages to the ships repaired. On the 23d of March signal was made to weigh, and the fleet stood out to sea in search of the British. Head winds and changeable weather made a rapid sail to the south impossible, and not until the 8th of April was the island of Ceylon sighted. On the following morning the lookout frigates signalled eleven of the enemy's ships headed for Trincomalee.

Sir Edward Hughes was not eager to engage. He wished first to land a large number of troops, and tried to evade the French. For two days Suffren strove to gain the wind, and Sir Edward to reach Trincomalee. But on the morning of the

12th the French fast-sailers opened a distant cannonading on the rear of the British fleet. Admiral Hughes, now forced to fight, formed his line of battle and waited for the attack. His fleet had been increased by the arrival of the *Sultan* and the *Magnanime*, thus bringing his ships to a number almost equal to that of the French.

At one o'clock the battle opened. Suffren's flag-ship advanced with silent guns; the enemy's broadsides were unanswered as they swept her deck. As she came within close range of the *Superb*, the British admiral's ship, the signal to open fire was run up to her masthead. The action became furious in the centre. Moving up the line the *Héros* turned her heavy fire into the *Monmouth*, and brought down her main and mizzen masts. Suffren's ship had suffered severely, and he signalled to his consort ships, the *Orient* and the *Brillant*, to second him in the fight. The heat of the battle had fallen to the centre, around the two flag-ships and their consorts. Suffren's instructions had been imperfectly followed, and both the vanguard and the rear kept at long range. The French line of battle thus formed a convex curve.

Toward four o'clock the battle lines fell into disorder, and signals for evolutions were made on both sides. The wind, which had been blowing from the northwest, passed into the north, and both fleets were carried inland into shoal water. The next hour was spent in manœuvring, the

firing slackened, and a sudden calm followed by a squall separated the opposing lines.

At eight o'clock Suffren, who had changed his flag from the damaged *Héros* to the *Ajax*, signalled for the ships to anchor wherever they could. The shoal water and the darkness made manœuvring dangerous, and Suffren feared for the safety of his vessels. The two fleets anchored so close together that voices from the nearest British ship could be distinctly heard on the deck of the *Héros*. The *Héros* was, in fact, surrounded by the enemy's fleet and found it difficult to distinguish between the signal guns of friend and foe. The rain was falling heavily, and the black sky covered the entire scene with a pall of darkness. Many accidents happened. The *Fine*, which had been sent to bring the disabled *Héros* among her consorts, ran foul of the British *Isis*, and M. de Goy, in attempting to reach Suffren's ship, hailed instead the British flag-ship and was made a prisoner.

When morning dawned, the two fleets were lying at a distance of two miles from each other, each side busy in repairing damages. After five days the French had finished the most urgent work, and were ready to hoist sail. On the 18th they weighed, but for two days Suffren still kept within sight of the enemy, hoping that Sir Edward would accept battle. But the British admiral remained at his anchorage, where Suffren thought it unadvisable to follow him.

The treacherous coral reefs, and his lack of men, ammunition, and all means of repairing damages, were to Suffren sufficient reasons for not attempting an attack. Besides, he says, "in such enterprises the result is either total gain or complete loss;" no drawn issue, only success or failure, and, as he adds somewhat bitterly, "the very hope of success, in such cases, must depend on ability and good will, and surely I have already tested these too severely to stake everything on them again." The audacity and faith in others as well as in himself that had carried him headlong into Port Praya had, since then, been tempered by the mortifying discovery that, among his captains, personal antipathy was a stronger lever than patriotism. Even poor ships and poor equipment were hindrances that could have been largely outweighed by a spirit of enthusiasm and single devotion. This moral handicap was one against which there was no redress.

But the unflinching determination of Suffren could not be vanquished by any difficulty. Without supplies of any kind, and without any definite prospect of obtaining them, he led his fleet to the bay of Batacolo, on the eastern coast of Ceylon. "Scurvy was making frightful ravages in the fleet," writes an eye-witness; "the medicines had all been used," provisions were short, crews overworked, materials exhausted, and the ships unfit for sea. The future was indeed dark.

Thirteen merchantmen captured by the *Bellone* brought in a much-needed relief. With the money from the sale of these prizes, Suffren bought supplies of all kinds from the storehouses of the Danish East India Company. French frigates scoured the seas and held up richly laden ships on their way from Europe or Bombay to Madras. By the 3d of June the fleet was ready to weigh.

Suffren writes, with pardonable pride, to the home government: "Since my arrival in Ceylon, through the help of the Dutch and the prizes that I have captured, the squadron has been provisioned for six months, and I have a supply of corn and rice that will last more than a year." Through his own resolute efforts this result had been accomplished. Being now ready for sea, he moved on to Cuddalore, which had lately been captured by the natives. There he entered into communication with Hyder-Aly.

The Indian chief had become exasperated with the French general, Duchemin, and his army corps. In the recent land operations the French contingent had taken no active part. Hyder-Aly felt that by want of this support he had missed the opportunity of winning brilliant results. It needed Suffren's emphatic and vigorous assurances to restore his confidence and win his coöperation. The French admiral promised him reënforcements from France, and meanwhile planned with him an attack on Negapatan, an important post on the

Coromandel coast. The friendship of the sultan was an imperative necessity. "India is no longer the same country," writes Suffren; some of the provinces "are absolutely devastated by the war, and it would be impossible to exist without the aid of Hyder-Aly. With his thousands of camels, he has provisions brought from the interior."

On the 3d of July the French fleet for the third time put to sea from the harbor of Cuddalore in search of their British opponents. Two days later the frigates signalled the enemy anchored between Naour and Negapatan. In this search for the British, Suffren lamented, as Nelson was to lament after him, the want of frigates. The French admiral writes: "If I had had frigates since I have been on the coast, we should have inflicted severe injury on the British. I have only two, and they have been used to their utmost."

On the morning of the 6th of July the two fleets had formed in line of battle, and at half-past ten the British bore down under full sail. When they came within range, Suffren gave the order to open fire. The number of ships engaged was equal on each side; the French *Ajax* having been dismasted in a squall before the engagement. The battle opened with animation, and a brisk fire was kept up along almost the whole line. But the thick of the fight was around the vanguard and the centre; there the firing was destructive, and in

less than two hours many of the vessels had suffered severely. The leading British ship was disabled, and forced to retire from the action. The French *Brillant* lost her mainmast, and was covered by the flag-ship.

Suddenly, at one o'clock, when the battle was at its height, the wind veered to the southeast, and threw both lines into confusion. Rapid evolutions followed this change, and a scattered fire was kept up between the opponents that had been thrown together in the shift of wind. By three o'clock all firing had ceased, and Suffren re-formed his line to engage anew. But the British fleet was running to the west, one of her ships was flying a signal of distress, two others were unfit for action, and all were manœuvred with difficulty. Admiral Hughes decided not to renew the fight, and made sail for Negapatan. On the following day Suffren returned to Cuddalore.

During the disorder of the evolutions a strange incident had happened on one of the French ships. Finding himself close to a British vessel and under heavy fire, the captain of the *Sévère* was seized with fright and completely lost his head. He gave the order to strike the flag. Some of the crew hauled down the colors, but two of the wounded officers of the *Sévère* rushed up on deck and insisted that the flag should be run up again, and the firing recommenced.

Suffren had heard nothing of this. He had sup-

posed the halliards to have been shot away, and the disappearance of the flag a pure accident of war. Not until later did he hear the truth, and then his indignation and anger at last found vent in action. The captain of the *Sévère* was at once deprived of his position, and sent as a common passenger to France. Two other officers who had flagrantly failed in their duty were also dismissed. Neither family, influence, nor relationship now held his hand from the just punishment of misdeeds, and the displeasure that had so long been held in check was finally felt throughout the fleet. For a moment the growing insubordination was quelled.

Although, at this time, Suffren was in reality a commodore, his commission had not yet reached him, and he felt that in his severe handling of his officers he had overreached the limits of his authority. It had been, in fact, this professional reticence that had kept him so long from administering justice; and it was, probably, the false position in which he was placed that had alienated the good will and ready obedience of his officers. He was in their eyes merely a captain with acting rank as commodore; they were his equals in actual rank, and in many cases his seniors in age. They viewed him with jealousy and distrust, and his inflexible character only added fuel to their discontent.

In the face of difficulties that to any other man

would have seemed insuperable, Suffren went to work to refit the fleet. Cuddalore had an open road, and heavy seas swept over it when the wind was high. There were no resources in the harbor for repairing the damaged ships. Yet the work was pushed night and day. Suffren's ingenuity and energy triumphed over all obstacles. He ordered the frigates to be dismasted in order to repair the ships of the line, and the masts of the sloops to be transferred to the frigates.

While the fleet was lying in the roadstead of Cuddalore, and the damages were being repaired with all possible haste, Suffren arranged for an interview with Hyder-Aly. The Indian sultan had, some time previously, expressed a wish to see the French leader who had so gallantly held his stand against the British. Wishing to give Suffren an unprecedented mark of his esteem, he moved his entire army of a hundred thousand men to within a few miles of the French anchorage ground. A large body of native cavalry was sent to escort Suffren from Cuddalore to the camp of Hyder-Aly, and on his arrival the entire army presented arms.

It required all the blunt energy and the honest purpose of the French commander to encourage the Indian chief in his warlike attitude. Suffren pitted honesty against cunning, and in return gained the confidence of the sultan and a complete ascendency over him. But the outlook was

discouraging. The other native princes from being the friends of Hyder-Aly had become his enemies. His own empire was threatened with invasion. The army of the sultan stood alone against the united forces of the whole of India and Great Britain. The nabob felt that he must either treat for peace or retire to his own provinces. Suffren dissuaded him from both of these alternatives. He promised him a large reënforcement that had already arrived at the Isle de France, and urged him to send his son, Tippoo-Sahib, to protect his own coasts. Hyder-Aly finally yielded to Suffren's stronger will.

This difficult mission accomplished, Suffren hastened the departure of the fleet. The situation demanded immediate action. On the 1st of August the order was given to weigh, and the French commodore headed for Batacalo, there to await the reënforcements from the Isle de France. Three weeks later seven transports and three ships arrived, laden with provisions, ammunition, and men. Letters from Europe also came by the *Lézard.* The minister of marine commended Suffren's conduct at Port Praya, and the Grand-master of Malta announced to him his promotion to the rank of bailiff, and enclosed the Grand Cross of the Order. It is by this title of Bailiff of the Order of St. John that Suffren has since been known throughout France.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM TRINCOMALEE TO CUDDALORE

WITH swift decision and dash, Suffren weighed anchor two days after the arrival of the reënforcements and headed for Trincomalee. News came to him that the British fleet had not yet left Madras where it was refitting. This was his chance for a decisive blow.

Reaching the mouth of the bay on the 25th of August, Suffren sailed into the outer harbor, beat to windward under a brisk southwest breeze, gained the inner harbor, and dropped anchor out of range of the fort batteries. During the night twenty-three hundred men were landed, together with siege artillery, ammunition, and three days' provisions.

The success of the enterprise depended upon promptness and vigor. Suffren acted with consummate generalship. Taken by surprise, the British garrison offered no resistance to the landing, but retired to the forts. On the 27th Suffren went ashore and directed the erection of mortar and gun batteries, and intrenchments. Encouraging and urging forward the men, the French com-

mander passed from work to work, and inspired his followers with his energy. Kaffirs and Sepoys labored shoulder to shoulder with marines and troops. Disliked by his officers, Suffren was adored by the common sailors and soldiers under his command. For him they worked with zeal and ardor. Rigorous and severe on any point of duty, he was their friend and benefactor, and they said of him, "Good like M. le bailli de Suffren."

The batteries were finished on the 29th and armed with six guns taken from the ships, and three mortars. Fire was opened early in the morning. Well directed and accurate, the heavy metal did rapid damage. All through the day shot and shell fell on the defences of the two Forts of Trincomalee and Ostienbourg. On the morning of the 30th, although the breach was not large, Suffren summoned the chief fort to surrender. Captain Hay Macdowal claimed the honors of war and a free passage to Madras. Suffren did not want prisoners, he wanted the fort, and he was in haste to get possession before the arrival of Sir Edward Hughes. Accepting all the conditions of the governor, he ran up the white flag on Fort Trincomalee; on the following day Fort Ostienbourg capitulated on the same terms.

In the space of five days Suffren had captured the only port on the east coast of Ceylon, a position of importance as an anchorage for the fleet. He

lost no time in placing a garrison in the forts, organizing his new conquest, and reëmbarking his men and material.

His previsions were soon realized. Two days after the fall of Trincomalee the French lookouts signalled the enemy's fleet. Suffren was ashore at the time. Hurriedly regaining his ship, he gave the order to weigh and prepare for battle. It was dusk when the enemy was sighted. Sir Edward Hughes was evidently still ignorant of the capture of Trincomalee and had not as yet discovered the French fleet which was moored close under the forts. Dropping anchor to the north of the bay, Sir Edward waited until morning before entering the harbor. He had come to protect the port, but he had come too late.

Early the following morning the British fleet confidently approached the entrance. At sight of the white standard of France floating over the forts, and Suffren's flag on the *Héros*, Sir Edward's surprise and dismay were complete. He fell back in consternation; the fleet bore up and stood out to sea.

Suffren was eager to follow up his conquest by a decisive victory over the British fleet. He fretted to measure himself again with his rival. In quick succession he made the signals to "Hoist all sail," "Clear the decks," and "Prepare for action." But Suffren's impetuosity was not shared by his captains. They were tired of fighting. Going on

board the flag-ship, they urged their commander to desist from a new battle. It was more prudent, they argued, to remain in harbor. Trincomalee gave the fleet a safe and comfortable wintering ground. Sir Edward was evidently keeping out to sea so as to separate the French fleet from the port and make it difficult for them to find refuge there again.

"Gentlemen," answered Suffren, "if the enemy were superior in numbers, I should retire; an equal force, I should hesitate to engage; but against inferior numbers, there is no choice, we must fight; make signal to weigh."

The fleet got under way, and the orders followed each other promptly to "Form in line" and to come to "Close quarters." It is one thing to give the orders and another to have them obeyed. The open insubordination and ill will of some of his officers and the hopeless stupidity of others ruined his plans. Signals were either misunderstood or not followed, the fast-sailing ships outstripped their laggard consorts, the line of battle was never formed. Fire broke out on the *Vengeur* and alarmed the other vessels. Disorder took possession of the fleet.

Some of the ships engaged within pistol shot. Most of them never reached their positions. Having made fruitless attempts to restore order, Suffren kept on his course and covered twenty-five miles in two hours and a half. The British fleet still stood

out to sea. As Suffren expressed it in his report, "Admiral Hughes evaded without fleeing, or rather he fled in good order." Not until two o'clock could Suffren reach him. A broadside from the *Héros*, fired by mistake sooner than was intended, opened the battle.

Three ships, alone and unsupported, suffered the brunt of the struggle — the *Héros*, the *Illustre*, and the *Ajax*. The other vessels had manœuvred badly. The whole of the vanguard and two of the centre were too far in advance of the British line, and were useless. Three vessels of the rear were almost out of range. Signal followed signal on the masthead of the flag-ship, but all to no avail. The scattered line could not be rallied. Ten vessels took no part in the battle.

Then Suffren plunged into the fight with bitter desperation. Abandoned by the greater part of his fleet, in close and mortal conflict with his rival, he paced the deck with fierce exasperation. His sails were in shreds, his rigging cut, he was enveloped in a cloud of smoke. Soon the mainmast fell; then the mizzentopmast crashed into the sea. His flag was shot away, and a cry of exultation rose from the enemy. It is said that he called out, "Bring flags, bring the white colors, and cover the ship with them."

Suffren was heart-broken. For three hours this uneven, cruel contest was kept up, and still the three devoted ships, groaning under the heavy

broadsides of the enemy's centre, raked fore and aft by the vanguard and the rear, answered with gallant courage and vigor.

A light southwest breeze sprang up at about half-past five, and the British tacked about. "If the enemy had veered head to wind," writes the flag captain, "we should have been cut off and probably destroyed."

When night closed in, the firing ceased, and Suffren beat back upon Trincomalee. He had changed his flag from the *Héros*, which was towed into port, together with the *Illustre*. The British did not follow, but headed for Madras.

Suffren was inconsolable over his lack of success. It is true that misfortune as well as disaffection contributed to the failure. The complete calm that followed the first stiff breeze left the ships helpless and immovable in their badly taken positions. Even had the captains wanted to rectify their mistakes, the complete absence of wind would have made it impossible. Want of zeal and hearty coöperation was, however, the chief cause of the unsuccess, and Suffren was only too glad when four of the officers, among them the senior captain of the fleet and the leader of the hidden mutiny against the commander-in-chief, asked leave to retire to the Isle de France, under the excuse of ill health and business.

The work of repairing the damaged ships was again actively pushed forward. The same inge-

nuity as before was shown in the devices for re-masting the vessels. Masts were changed from frigates to ships of the line, and the unfortunate *Orient*, which had been run aground through the ignorance of her officer, was used as material for repairs.

Early in October the fleet left Trincomalee and moved on to Cuddalore. In entering the harbor the new and inexperienced captain of the *Bizarre* ran her ashore, and every effort to haul her off was unsuccessful. Two ships had thus been lost by the carelessness of their officers. This was a fresh trial for Suffren; and while the French fleet had been losing vessels, the British had been reënforced by a squadron of five ships under Sir Richard Bickerton, who arrived at Madras in December.

During the season of the winter monsoons the two fleets were obliged to seek shelter in safer harborage than on the east coast of India. Sir Edward Hughes sailed for Bombay and prepared to winter in that port. Suffren, it had been supposed, would be forced to make sail for the Isle de France, and the British were not displeased at the thought that on the return of the fine season they would be the first on the scene of action. But Suffren's plans could never be counted on. He decided, instead, to find winter quarters in the ample and well-protected roadstead of Achem on the island of Sumatra. Leaving Cuddalore on

the 15th of October, the French fleet cast anchor, two weeks later, off Achem.

Suffren's stay in port was not long — less than two months. He was eager to be on the seas once more. On the 20th of December he again weighed anchor, turned northward, and cruised along the coast. Two weeks brought him to Ganjam on the Orixa coast, where he captured some British ships laden with rice. A few days later a British frigate ran into the fleet, and was taken. From her captain, Suffren learned of the sudden death of Hyder-Aly on the 7th of December.

The loss of his Indian ally filled Suffren with concern. He at once gave up his desultory cruising expeditions and headed for Cuddalore. The situation needed his ruling hand. The nabob's son, Tippoo-Sahib, had assumed the chief command of his father's army, and was cordially inclined toward the French. But his own provinces on the coast of Malabar had been invaded by the British, and several important places had fallen into their hands. Tippoo-Sahib had finally determined to leave the coast of Coromandel and hasten to the defence of his own possessions, when the arrival of Suffren induced the young Indian chief to change his plans and to renew his father's alliance with the French.

Suffren now made haste to gain Trincomalee. Sir Edward Hughes might any day appear upon the scene with his increased forces, and the French

commander was in no condition to meet him. Under press of sail he hurried southward, there to await a long-expected reënforcement from Europe. Finally, on the 9th of March, a small squadron appeared in the offing, and a few hours later three ships of the line, one frigate, and thirty-four transports, laden with supplies, cast anchor in the harbor of Trincomalee.

However welcome this new force was, it could not be considered as a strong addition to the fleet; two of the ships were in such bad condition when they left Brest that the long voyage had been made with the greatest difficulty and with mortifying slowness. Suffren writes: "It is incredible that two ships, in such a condition as were the *Hardi* and the *Alexandre*, should have been sent out from Brest to India."

This was not the only disappointment. The squadron from France brought Lieutenant-general de Bussy, the new commander-in-chief, who had been sent out to assume the head of the naval and military forces, an old man in wretched health and of no initiative. To compensate somewhat for these misfortunes, Suffren received his commission as commodore, and a complimentary letter from the minister, in which Marshal de Castries writes: "I cannot express to you the high degree of confidence that your conduct has given in your audacity and talents."

To Suffren, who was ever more eager for an

occasion to do his duty and to fight the enemies of his country than for personal reward or distinction, this praise could not wholly offset the appointment of an incompetent and invalided commander. Writing on this point to the minister, he says: "I am under the orders of M. de Bussy. My only reason to regret this is that no good can come of it to the service; but I can assure you that I shall do my utmost so that no harm may come of it."

Acting with characteristic disinterestedness and vigor, Suffren decided to accompany the troops and supplies to Cuddalore. The garrison needed strengthening and was in daily expectation of an attack both by land and sea. The British admiral was known to have left Bombay, and might cut off communications at any time. With seven ships of the line and five frigates to protect the transports, the run was successfully made. The troops and supplies were landed at Porto Novo and at Cuddalore during the nights of the 16th and 17th of March, M. de Bussy, who was suffering from the gout, having to be carried into Cuddalore in a palanquin.

Turning southward again on the 4th of April, Suffren made a dash for Trincomalee. He must reach port before Sir Edward Hughes could intercept him. Scarcely had he come within sight of the harbor than the lookout frigate signalled eighteen ships of the line. Pressing forward with

every sail hoisted to the wind, Suffren had the satisfaction of sailing into port within sight of the enemy's fleet.

The old and battered ships of the French fleet were sorely in need of repair. At Achem the resources had been scanty. They now underwent a thorough overhauling. While the work of repairing damages was carried on with activity, alarming news reached Suffren from the commander-in-chief. General de Bussy was shut up in Cuddalore, besieged by land and sea. At the head of the British army General Stuart had taken up a strong position on the north and south of the town. Sir Edward Hughes was blockading the harbor and preventing all communication by sea. Provisions were running low, and the garrison was in need of supplies.

Still, Suffren could not leave port for several weeks. His ships were not seaworthy. Most of them had not been heaved down for five years; some had to be constantly pumped out. Manned by only three-quarters of their regular crews, the vacancies had not been filled since 1781. Under these conditions it was not possible to put to sea until the 11th of June. Two days later the frigates sighted the British fleet of eighteen men-of-war at anchor off Cuddalore.

On the approach of the French, Admiral Hughes weighed anchor and advanced to meet his rival. But Suffren was not ready to engage. He was

meditating a brilliant and audacious move. Using his superior knowledge of tactics, he put his fleet through a series of evolutions which brought him into communication with the port. Great was Sir Edward's annoyance when he found that his enemy had changed places with him, and had slipped his ships, by clever manœuvres, between the British and the shore.

Suffren could now throw supplies into the besieged place, and in return receive reënforcements to his crews. On the 18th he was ready to offer combat, but for two days Sir Edward refused it. Finally on the 20th the two fleets bore down on each other. Numerically, the British were far superior to their opponents, although the scurvy had broken out with fearful virulence and had greatly reduced the crews.

Immediately before the battle Suffren changed his flag to the frigate *Cléopatre*, in accordance with an order from the home government. The recent capture of the Count de Grasse, who had been made prisoner in his own ship, the *Ville de Paris*, had been the cause of this order. To view the battle from afar, and take no part in it, must have been an almost unendurable trial to the impetuous and daring Suffren, accustomed as he was to plunge recklessly into the heat of the fight.

Suffren's tactics had been the first step toward success. At four o'clock on the afternoon of the 20th the signal to open fire was flying from the

masthead of the *Cléopatre*. From then until seven o'clock the battle was kept up with spirit, and not until night closed did the firing cease. The British retired to Madras, leaving the battle ground to Suffren and thus acknowledging his victory. The French commander had accomplished his object of relieving Cuddalore and raising the blockade by a dashing feat, and a successful combat against a superior force. It was the crowning action of the campaign.

Suffren's first impulse was to cut his cables and fly in pursuit of the enemy, but he was learning to curb his impetuosity. He was short of anchors and cables, and had few fast-sailing vessels; Cuddalore was still threatened by land, and had given him twelve hundred of her garrison. For these reasons he contented himself with his already splendid triumph, and anchored in the roadstead of Cuddalore. There he was received with enthusiasm. A salute of guns from the forts, and cries of "Vive le Roi! Vive Suffren!" greeted him as he stepped ashore. An immense concourse of people had gathered on the dock to meet and escort him to the town.

Action, however, not repose, was Suffren's motto. He now urged M. de Bussy to make a general and vigorous sortie on the army of General Stuart. To this the commander-in-chief was opposed, and while Suffren was still trying to instil energy into the impotent counsels of his

chief, news arrived of the cessation of hostilities. The treaty of peace signed between France, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States put an end to the war.

Suffren's return to Europe was a triumphal progress. At the Isle de France he met with the wildest demonstrations of joy. At Table Bay, where he touched, nine British ships were anchored in the roadstead, and to Suffren the most flattering of all the homages he received were the marks of esteem and consideration shown him by the British officers.

Suffren dropped anchor in the harbor of Toulon on the 26th of March, 1784. France lavished her favors upon the hero of the Indian Ocean. He was the idol of the people. At court he was treated with distinct honor. The rank of lieutenant-general had already been conferred on him after the capture of Trincomalee and the first battles of the campaign. The king now created for him a fourth vice-admiralship, and in April invested him with his new dignity. As this rank was created solely for Suffren, the king ordered it to be abolished at his death.

The new admiral lived only four years after the brilliant campaign that has become one of the famous naval achievements of which France can boast. Called to the command of a fleet that had been fitted out at Brest on the threatened outbreak of fresh troubles between France and Great Brit-

ain, he was taken suddenly ill, and died on the 8th of December, 1788.

Wretched materials, leaky ships, raw, motley, and insufficient crews; no ports or storehouses, no supplies of provisions or ammunition; lack of masts and rigging, anchors and cordage to repair damages; a restless ally to reclaim and satisfy; officers ignorant, cowardly, mutinous — these were some of the difficulties against which Suffren opposed his inflexible will, passionate determination, unflinching patriotism; his readiness, knowledge, and sense of duty. And he won. This is the strongest eulogy that can be given him.

VICE-ADMIRAL PAUL JONES

1747-1792

VICE-ADMIRAL PAUL JONES

CHAPTER XVIII

AN INTERNATIONAL SEA FIGHTER

A MAN of no country, "citizen of the world," and fighter in the cause of humanity; a Scottish trader, an American commodore, a French chevalier, a Russian admiral; the most striking figure in the United States navy, winner of the most conspicuous sea battle of the Revolution — this was Paul Jones.

He was the Drake of the New World. A man of violent contrasts, adventurer, courtier, and distinguished commander; an invincible fighter, summary in punishment, with the spirit of plunder and rapine held more in check than by his ancient predecessor, shrewd in personal enrichment, of unfettered ambition, ferocious, unyielding, enthusiastic, versatile.

Like Drake, the love of the sea mastered him in childhood; like Drake he began his career as a slave trader in voyages to the West Indies; like Drake he was a forerunner, the pioneer of a new sea-power, founder of a new navy; like him he understood the value of offensive action carried

into the waters and along the coast-line of the enemy.

Like Drake, his name has been surrounded by a veil of tradition and romance, made the subject of popular tales and fanciful legends which have clouded and distorted actual truth and history; and he has been as much hated in Great Britain as "El Draque" was in Spain.

Coming upon the scene before the first rumblings of a far-distant storm could yet be heard, trained from earliest years in the rough schooling of the sea, he was swept in full manhood into the tempestuous current of stirring events, which awakened a new nation in a new world, and proved him to be one of those men whom destiny reserves for great crises.

Born in 1747, on the shores of southern Scotland,[1] his earliest home and his first playground were on the borders of that water that he learned to love so well. Official records state that he "was born on the 6th of July, 1747, at Arbigland,

[1] I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Buell's valuable and spirited work on Paul Jones, recently published by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons. The many previous "Lives," all of which have been under my hand, are incomplete and unsatisfactory, and we now have for the first time an adequate biography of the "Founder of the American Navy." The mass of fresh and interesting material, which Mr. Buell has gathered together, throws new light on every phase of the career of Admiral Jones, and becomes indispensable in the preparation of any sketch, however slight, of the most prominent figure in the Revolutionary navy.

in the parish of Kirkbean and Stewartry (or county) of Kirkcudbright."

His father, John Paul, a Lowlander, — a man of staunch peasant stock and of more than ordinary intelligence, — was head gardener, gamekeeper, and fish-warden to a country squire, the Hon. Robert Craik. Jeanne Macduff, his wife, a "Hieland Lassie" and descendant of one of the fierce clans that had their home among the heathered hills of Scotland, also served in the employ of their master, the country squire, as lady's maid to Mrs. Craik.

Reaching down to the rugged shores of Solway Firth, the Craik estate extended along the borders of the Nith River, and covered stretches of park, dense woods, and glades, cut here and there by small salmon streams that found their way into the Nith. Near by was the little fishing hamlet of Arbigland, and the quiet inlet where the sturdy fishermen brought in their boats; across the river was the larger town of Dumfries; while on the opposite side of the Solway, twenty-five miles by water, on England's shore, lay Whitehaven, a prosperous commercial port and centre of trade.

John Paul was the father of seven children — four sons and three daughters. His eldest boy, William, born in 1730, was early adopted by a distant relative, William Jones, who had emigrated to the American colonies, and lived on his plantation in Virginia, a thriving and successful business

man. William sailed to his new home across the Atlantic and assumed the name of Jones, three years before John Paul, Jr., the fifth child and youngest son, came into the world.

Little John Paul's childhood was short; he soon grew into a hardy, self-confident, independent lad, with scant instruction save what he learned at the humble parish school of Kirkbean. But his lessons came to an end when he was twelve, and even before that time were often interrupted by his favorite studies on the margin of Carsethorn Creek, where seamen sought shelter from storms and tides, and unloaded their cargoes of tobacco for Dumfries. There he sailed his mimic boats, listened to the old tars' yarns, learned the mariners' grammar, and with eager eyes and keen intelligence watched the fishermen as they steered their boats into harbor. There he learned to handle a yawl and to brave the sudden northeast squalls that tried the courage and capacity of many an experienced fisherman.

Sturdy, fearless, and with a passionate longing for sea-life thus early developed, he begged his father to let him ship aboard some merchant vessel sailing from Whitehaven to Virginia and the West Indies. The earnest desire of the young sailor boy prevailed, and in the summer of 1759, when he was only twelve, John Paul, Jr., was sent across the Solway and apprenticed to James Younger, Esq., a prosperous merchant in the American

trade. Soon after a new brig spread her sails and stood out to sea on her first voyage. It was the *Friendship*, bound for Virginia, belonging to James Younger, with Captain Bennison in command and John Paul, Jr., as master's apprentice. A month later she leisurely dropped anchor in the Rappahannock river, not far from the plantation of William Jones.

The intense boyish desire of John Paul was now realized. He was launched upon the career that he loved, and his first voyage had brought him to the very home of his brother whom he had never seen. He found William Paul Jones, who was seventeen years older than himself, a successful married man, the business manager and overseer of his adopted father's trade and plantation. While the *Friendship* lay at anchor in the Rappahannock, her master's apprentice spent much of his time on land with his brother, and it was then that he was for the first time attracted to the novel and independent life of the American colonies. But while his lively interest was awakened and stirred by the half-wild, half-civilized land that he afterward adopted, his love then and always was for the sea. And, although William Jones offered to adopt him as his second son, he chose rather to throw in his fortunes with his god-father Neptune. After the round trip to Virginia, the West Indies, and back to England, the *Friendship* sailed into Whitehaven harbor early in 1760.

For the next six years John Paul sailed on trading voyages in Mr. Younger's ships, and advanced rapidly in capacity and skill. He had a keen, open mind, quick to observe; his intelligence was unusual in so young a boy, and he had an exceptionally retentive memory. With this outfit he was sure to succeed in the struggle of life, especially as his grit, self-dependence, and force would sooner or later lead him into positions of command. In 1764 we hear of his serving as second mate on West Indian traders, and in 1765 as first mate. Mr. Younger retired from business in the following year, and released John Paul from his indentures, giving him at the same time a sixth interest in a packet in the West Indian trade.

As first mate of the *King George*, John Paul made two voyages with Captain Denbigh to the west coast of Africa and to Jamaica, doing a profitable business in the slave trade. But at the end of the second voyage he sold his share in the ship to Captain Denbigh, and returned to England as passenger on board the *John O'Gaunt*, sailing from Kingston, Jamaica, to Whitehaven. This trip proved to be one of those chances that fortune threw into his hands, and that he was always ready to catch. John Paul never missed the opportunities of destiny by being taken unprepared.

The seeds of the yellow fever sailed on the *John O'Gaunt* when she left the Antilles and stood out from the Caribbean Sea into the Atlantic Ocean.

Hardly had she cleared the Windward Islands before its ravages spread through the crew. The captain, mate, and most of the crew died within a few days. Only five were left, and John Paul, passenger.

The constant and independent studies of John Paul in seamanship and tactics now served him a good purpose. He assumed command of the fever-stricken brig, and brought her safely into the harbor of Whitehaven. Her owners, Currie, Beck & Co., showed their gratitude by giving him a generous reward, and by appointing him captain and supercargo of a new ship, the *John*, bound for the West Indies. In command of this ship he made three round-trip voyages, visiting his brother on the Rappahannock, and drawing together even more closely the bonds that united him to America.

On the death of Mr. William Jones, the Virginia planter, in 1760, he had left his entire property of three thousand acres, buildings, slaves, cattle, and sloop to his adopted son. But a clause in the will provided that, in case William should die without children, John Paul was to inherit the property. Only one condition was attached to the bequest: John Paul must assume the name of Jones, as his brother had done before him. When John Paul sailed away in 1769 from the Rappahannock, after having legally accepted the conditions of the will, he perhaps little thought how soon he was to return and take possession of his American plantation.

After reaching England he was put in command of a merchant vessel belonging to Currie, Beck & Co., but chartered by the East India Company as a convoy ship to transport stores and troops to the Indian Ocean. The round trip covered a year from 1771 to 1772. His last merchant voyage was undertaken late in 1772 as captain of the *Two Friends*. Sailing by way of Lisbon, the Madeira Islands, and Tobago, he dropped anchor in the Rappahannock in April, 1773. He had arrived at the Jones plantation too late to see his brother again. William Jones was lying at the point of death and was unconscious. He died soon after.

John Paul now became the master of a Virginia estate, and destiny seemed to reserve him for the uneventful life of a colonial planter. He assumed the name of Jones, sent the *Two Friends* on her homebound voyage under the command of her first mate, and settled down as an American landed proprietor. His plantation covered broad acres of cultivated land and dense forests of "strong, first-growth timber." It included grist-mill, tobacco houses, river wharf, negro quarters, stables, and all the necessary belongings of a small but flourishing plantation in tide-water Virginia.

For two years Paul Jones enjoyed the quiet and independent life of a country squire. Leaving the business of his estate to Duncan Macbean, his brother's faithful overseer, who had already man-

aged it successfully for many years, he gave himself up to society and study. He entertained the neighboring families of Virginia with lavish hospitality; he travelled, visited, observed, and broadened his knowledge of affairs and men. The poor Scotch gardener's son, taught until he was twelve at a small parish school, for sixteen years apprentice, mate, and captain of merchant ships, had become a cultivated man of the world, a politician, a finished scholar, and a master in the art of the sea.

Paul Jones had trained himself. He was a natural student, not only of books, but of life and things. Wherever he went he was quick and alert to see. He studied French and Spanish, naval history and tactics, diplomacy and politics. In his own profession he had mastered not merely the details of a seaman's practical knowledge, but the broader features of the influence of sea control on national power and expansion. Although only a merchant mariner, he had made himself familiar with the conditions of the chief navies of Europe. He knew how war-ships should be built, and what it cost to build them. He knew the difference in construction between British frigates and French frigates. He had made plans and taken dimensions of foreign vessels, and knew the capacity of foreign dockyards.

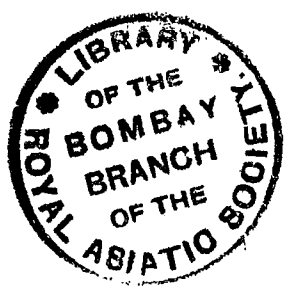
His sphere of interest was wide and varied, and he was constantly preparing himself for a possible but unknown future in which his ambition for

glory and distinction might be satisfied. He loved power, and with marvellous energy and will he had supplied himself with the means of gaining power. One of these means, he early recognized, was intercourse with men of position, influence, and note, the great leaders and the brilliant minds of the time. He met Colonel Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Philip Livingston, and the Lees; he was a warm friend of Joseph Hewes, and became acquainted with prominent men of New York, North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and the most distinguished of the Virginian families.

Quick to grasp the signs and meaning of the political outlook, and to feel the drift of coming events, it was not a surprise to him to see the gathering of the storm that burst upon the country in the battle of Lexington. In January, 1775, Jones writes, "I availed myself of these occasions (conferences between Washington, Jefferson, Livingston, and the Lees) to assure Colonel Washington, Mr. Jefferson, and all the others that my services would be at the disposal of the colonies whenever their cause should require service on my own element."

A man of action, of indomitable strength, and of broad and vivid interest in public affairs, like Paul Jones, was not one to be laggard in the face of stirring events. A fighter by nature, so great a fighter that he was later to accept service under a foreign flag rather than remain inactive under

the flag of his adoption, Paul Jones could not fail to be one of the first to strike a blow on his own element. And he was quick to perceive that the creation of a navy would be for the colonies the inevitable consequence of a struggle with Great Britain.



CHAPTER XIX

THE BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN NAVY

THE opening blast of the Revolution found Paul Jones swift to respond. He had started in his sloop for a sail to Boston, but on reaching New York late in April he heard from William Livingston the news of the battle of Lexington. "This caused an immediate change of my plans," he writes. He had laid out for himself a long expedition, which he now promptly abandoned, and on the 24th of April set sail for home. Three days later he was picking up his moorings at the plantation, and writing to Mr. Hewes and other members of the Continental Congress to offer the assistance of his seafaring experience in the formation of a naval force.

His help and advice were soon to be called for. In June, 1775, the new marine committee, on which figured his friend Joseph Hewes, invited him to lay before them any information and advice that he might consider useful on two points: the proper qualifications of naval officers, and the kind of armed vessels most desirable for the service of the united colonies. Paul Jones embodied his views in two able and trenchant letters. The

strength, directness, and broad scope of his answers carried with them weight and influence. The committee accepted them, with few changes, as the basis of their decisions. Paul Jones was thus the first seaman who shared in the creation of our navy. His judgment as a marine expert ruled the counsels of the group of men who, as he writes to them, were "called upon to found a new navy, to lay the foundations of a new power afloat."

Paul Jones's estimate of the necessary qualifications of a naval officer was high: he should be, not only a capable mariner, but a man of liberal education, versed in foreign languages, international law, diplomacy and admiralty jurisprudence; absolute in authority, just and tactful.

Even more valuable and of practical assistance was his advice as to the best kind of ship to be constructed. He considered it unwise to attempt the building of ships of the line. As the affairs of America "cry *haste!*" and as the resources of Congress were limited, he strongly urged the construction of frigates rating from thirty-two twelve-pounders, to forty eighteen-pounders. The information he gave on the different points of cost, dimensions, plans, and materials was clear, precise, and convincing. Although a scheme had already been presented to the committee for the construction of six ships of the line, Jones's opinion prevailed, and a resolution was passed authorizing the building of six twelve-pounder frigates.

The first squadron of our national navy consisted of four ships — the frigates *Alfred* and *Columbus*, and the brigantines *Andrea Doria* and *Cabot*. The first list of officers included five captains, five first lieutenants, and eight junior lieutenants. In this list Paul Jones stood at the head of the first lieutenants. Favoritism and the power of the Massachusetts party on the naval committee kept him out of the list of captains. That he felt the slight and injustice of the arrangement is certain; but, in a vein of broad disinterestedness, he writes to Mr. Hewes: "I am here to serve the cause of human rights, not to promote the fortunes of Paul Jones. . . . I will cheerfully enter upon the duties of first lieutenant of the *Alfred* under Captain Saltonstall. Time will make all things even."

Although he had been intrusted with the entire care of converting the *Alfred* from a merchantman into a war frigate, and had repaired, equipped, and fitted her out for service, he now in a spirit of generous devotion accepted an inferior rank. His commission as lieutenant was dated on the 7th of December, 1775. Less than three weeks later he assumed temporary command of the *Alfred*, Captain Saltonstall not having yet arrived, and hoisted with his own hands for the first time the original American flag — the pine tree and rattlesnake.

The little squadron was not ready for sea until the 17th of February, 1776, when it sailed from

Delaware Bay and headed for the Bahamas. Almost two months later, on the 11th of April, the squadron dropped anchor in the harbor of New London after a cruise that ended in court-martials and disgrace. It had taken only a few months for time to "make all things even." Captains appointed through influence and favoritism were dismissed, while Paul Jones was honorably retained and given an independent command.

On the 10th of May he was ordered to take command "as captain of the *Providence*," a small sloop of fourteen guns, and his appointment was written on the back of his lieutenant's commission. After transporting troops and stores between New London and New York, and convoying American ships along the coast, he started on a cruise to harass British commerce, which lasted for six weeks and five days. With a crew of seventy men and only twelve four-pounders, he sped through waters swarming with British frigates from the Bermudas to Nova Scotia, destroyed the enemy's fisheries at Canso, and made two daring descents on the island of Madame, surprising the shipping and capturing stores. Sixteen prizes fell into his hands, besides a large number of fishing smacks; of these he manned eight and destroyed the rest. Twice the little *Providence* was pursued by British frigates. Near the Bermudas she fell in with the *Solebay* of twenty-eight nine-pounders, and for six hours was chased by her, part of the time within

short range. Once she was almost in the clutches of her enemy, and her fate seemed sealed, but by a sudden and audacious manœuvre the American captain dodged his antagonist in such a way that the Britisher "got taken aback" and, as Paul Jones says, "let me have the chance to show him a clean pair of heels on my little sloop's best point of sailing."

Paul Jones received his captain's commission from Congress on his return to port in August. In the following October he was ordered to take command of the *Alfred* and the *Providence*, and to cruise in northern waters. A descent on the coal fleet and fisheries of Cape Breton was the original object of the expedition. Hoisting sail on the 2d of November, he turned toward Canada. His first prizes were a brig with a rich cargo of dry goods, a snow loaded with fish, and the armed transport *Mellish*, bound for Canada, carrying a large and valuable store of uniforms, bedding, clothing, tents, saddles, ammunition, and other army supplies intended for the British troops in America.

Continuing on his way, and jealously guarding his rich prizes, Jones stopped at Canso, where he burnt and destroyed the warehouses, stores, and a fine transport. By the 26th of November he had added to his fleet of prizes three ships of the British coal fleet, and a letter of marque from Liverpool. As his water and provisions were now running short, and he had a hundred and fifty prisoners on board, he decided to escort his prize convoy to the

shelter of some friendly port, and turned southward toward Boston. Advancing cautiously on his homebound course, and running before the *Milford*, a full-manned 32-gun British frigate, which he fell in with off St. George's Bank, he finally brought his prizes safe into harbor.

While Paul Jones had been ranging the seas and harassing the enemy's commerce, the cruel chances of war had dealt him a severe blow behind his back. His plantation had been ravaged by the British; his houses, mill, and store buildings burned, his crops destroyed, his wharf levelled, his slaves sold to Jamaica merchants — "the completest wreck imaginable of any kind of possessions." But he did not complain. "This is, of course, a part of the fortunes of war," he writes to his friend, Mr. Hewes; "it thus appears that I have no fortune left but my sword, and no prospect except that of getting alongside the enemy." This prospect was before long to be realized.

Paul Jones was at all times a man of original ideas, and was persistent, enthusiastic, impetuous in upholding them. Like Drake before him he saw the necessity of carrying hostilities into the enemy's waters, of destroying shipping in home ports, of harassing and injuring commerce on home shores. He saw, besides, that success in British seas would bring with it more prestige and raise us higher in the estimation of Europe than even greater victories in American waters.

His earnest and tireless appeals for a command or for service in the English and Irish channels at last bore fruit. Final and full recognition came from General Washington himself, before whom Jones had laid his case with a vehemence that carried conviction, and that inspired Washington to say to him, "Captain Jones, you have conceived the right project, and you are the right man to execute it."

The result was an appointment to command the new sloop-of-war *Ranger*, carrying twenty six-pounders, and orders to hold himself in readiness for a swift sail to France to carry despatches of the highest importance. The *Ranger* stood out to sea on the 1st of November, 1777, and the news she carried under seal was the surrender of Burgoyne.

Under crowded sail the little sloop dashed over the Atlantic, staggering in the teeth of heavy northeast winds, blindly driven through snow squalls by day and thick fogs by night. Still Captain Jones "stuck grimly to his great circle," the shortest route by a week. "I will spread this news in France in thirty days," he had said, and he raced across the ocean at a speed that filled his crew with amazement. And yet "not a man was punished or even severely reprimanded during this terrific voyage," writes the second lieutenant. When Captain Jones assumed command of a ship, he threw the "cat-o'-nine-tails" overboard, and

banished floggings. He made his sailors like him, and, as he writes, "with sailors, as they average up, liking a commander and being of a will to fight for him to the last gasp, are quite the same thoughts."

On the last day of the run the *Ranger* captured two prizes bound from eastern marts to London, and on the 2d of December, 1777, she sailed into the Loire and dropped anchor at Nantes. Captain Jones travelled post-haste to Paris with his packet of news, only to find that he had been already outstripped. Mr. Austin had arrived from Boston twenty-four hours earlier with duplicate despatches, having sailed two days before the *Ranger*. This was not the only disappointment that greeted Jones. He had been promised, by Congress, a large, new frigate built for the United States at a neutral Dutch dockyard. On reaching Paris he found that the vessel had been, for political reasons, already sold to the French king. Instead of starting on his long-cherished cruise in British waters on the deck of a fine new 46-gun frigate, Jones was thus forced to content himself with the little sloop *Ranger* of twenty guns.

Still fully determined to "get alongside the enemy," Jones gave his ship a thorough refitting, and early in February sailed into the harbor of Brest. A dense crowd of rigging filled the roadstead, as the *Ranger*, flying the American colors at her masthead, appeared in the offing. It was

the great French fleet under the command of Count d'Orvilliers. Prompt in upholding the honor of the flag, Paul Jones asked, as a condition of his entering the port, an answering salute from the French fleet. His request was granted, and, as the stars and stripes passed through the midst of the heavy line-of-battle ships, the French guns roared out the first salute ever given by a foreign navy to the national standard of the United States.

One week earlier the Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States, which first recognized American independence, had been signed at Versailles. The salute to the flag was the seal to the treaty. To Paul Jones it was a matter of strong personal feeling. "The flag and I are twins," he had said, for the same resolution of Congress that had appointed him to the command of the ship *Ranger* had decreed that the national flag of the United States should be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, and thirteen stars in a blue field.

It was April before the *Ranger* got under way for her famous cruise — the cruise that spread the terror of Paul Jones's name along the coasts of England and Ireland, and won for him the titles of "pirate" and "freebooter." Early on the morning of the 10th of April "the sauciest craft afloat," as she was called by her second lieutenant, in outward appearance "a perfect beauty," glided out of the roads of Brest, and headed for the

coast of Ireland. Capturing or destroying British traders along the southern coast of England, Jones entered St. George's Channel. Driven by a heavy gale into the Irish Sea, he formed the bold scheme of making a sudden descent on Whitehaven to burn and destroy the shipping. High and shifting winds and heavy seas foiled the first venture, and in a second attempt the *Ranger* was kept back by light winds and a sudden calm.

But, resolved not to abandon his project, Captain Jones ordered out the boats and called for volunteers. Twenty-nine seamen, two lieutenants, and a midshipman offered to join in the attack. Leading the party in the first boat, Jones crept stealthily toward the town; as he reached the pier, dawn began to break. There was now little time left for the enterprise, for the town was beginning to be roused. He divided his men into two parties: Lieutenant Wallingford and his division were to set fire to the shipping on the north side of the harbor, while Paul Jones led his men to the south.

Nearly three hundred vessels lay side by side in the dry basin. A few fires kindled among them would have wrapped them in flames. But "by the strangest fatality," as Jones says, the candles of the two parties burned out while he was scaling the walls of the forts and spiking the guns. Finally a light was obtained from a neighboring house, and while the alarmed inhabitants were

gathering on all sides, a ship's hold was set on fire. The flames leaped up the hatchway and spread to masts and rigging. It was too late to attempt more. The town was thoroughly aroused, and it was now broad daylight. Jones and his men gained their boats and rowed back to the *Ranger*.

Not contented with his attack on Whitehaven, Jones stood over for the south shore of Scotland, where, on St. Mary's Isle, lay the castle of the Earl of Selkirk. The raid he proposed was in true buccaneer style, and for once his hot spirit of brigandage went beyond the limits of a naval officer's commission. To surprise the castle, kidnap the earl, and carry him off as hostage for the good treatment of American prisoners was an original but hardly a warlike enterprise. The attempt failed, as the earl was away, but the crew were allowed to carry off the Selkirk plate, which Jones returned to the countess five years later.

On the morning of the 24th of April the *Ranger* was off Carrickfergus on the north coast of Ireland. Inside the harbor, and preparing to come out, was the *Drake*, a British sloop-of-war of twenty guns. Contrary winds and an incoming tide made her slow in working out, and meanwhile she sent one of her boats to reconnoitre the strange sail in the offing. Lured on by the innocent-looking stern of the *Ranger*, the British boat came within hail, and alongside. She was punished for

her want of caution. Her officer and men were promptly made prisoners.

It was an hour before sunset when the *Drake* finally weathered the point and came within hail in mid-channel. The British flag was run up on her masthead, and at the same moment the *Ranger* flung out the stars and stripes. In answer to the hail, "What ship is that?" came the answer: "The American continental ship, *Ranger*. Come on; we are waiting for you." And the last word of the answer had scarcely died away before it was followed by a raking broadside at close range. There was now no doubt left as to the character of the strange ship and her commander. She was the dashing sloop that had coolly made her way into the heart of Whitehaven harbor, and her commander was the audacious Paul Jones, daring to plan and swift to execute.

The *Drake* bore up and poured her answer back. Then for an hour and five minutes the action was "warm, close, and obstinate." Broadside after broadside followed one another in quick succession, but the gunnery of the *Ranger's* men was far superior to that of their antagonists. Jones, in speaking of the efficiency of his men, says: "Every shot told, and they gave the *Drake* three broadsides for two, right along. . . . It was pure and simple broadsiding at close range. . . . The enemy's fire was spirited, but, for a king's ship, very ineffective."

In an hour's time the *Drake* was almost a wreck. Her spars and rigging were crippled, her sails cut to pieces, two ensigns shot away, her masts and yards shattered, her captain killed, and numbers of her men wounded. When she had become "an unmanageable log on the water" she struck her flag and was boarded by the *Ranger's* men.

The capture of the *Drake* was the first marked naval success of the war. That a British war vessel had surrendered to one of equal or inferior force fighting under the American flag, was in itself a moral victory greater than the material advantage won, even though British authorities claim that the *Drake* was "not in a fit state for actual service." The ships themselves were small and unimportant, but the results were large in comparison. The victorious cruise of the *Ranger* in British waters, the seizure of prizes, the daring though unsuccessful surprise of Whitehaven harbor, when the destruction of an enormous quantity of valuable shipping failed only through the incompetency of under officers, the final action and capture of the *Drake*, formed a brilliant and dramatic début of the new-born navy. It aroused and alarmed the British coast, and filled all Englishmen with indignation and surprise. It gratified and won the admiration of France, the foe of Britain and friend of the new republic. And it gave authority, confidence, and vitality to the young and still undeveloped naval power that was



The *Ranger* and the *Drake.*

measuring its strength with the firmly established mistress of the sea. It was with a natural and pardonable feeling of professional pride that Paul Jones looked forward to his return to Brest, leading the trophy of his victory.

Fair weather and moderate winds on the morning of the 25th made easy the work of repairing the *Ranger* and patching up the *Drake* for the return voyage. Sailing southward through St. George's Channel, Jones made his way to the French coast, accompanied by his war prize and a large merchant brigantine captured on the last day. He arrived in the roads of Brest on the 8th of May, less than a month after he had first put to sea.

At Brest he was received in triumph. Hostilities had opened between France and Great Britain, the great French fleet had been placed on a war footing, and to the officers of Count d'Orvilliers's squadrons the arrival of the first war prize was an event of curiosity, interest, and congratulation. Paul Jones became the hero of the hour, applauded and admired by the court and the people.

Weeks and months of trouble and uncertainty were, however, to follow on the heels of his success. His first care was to provide for the urgent necessities of his crew, to feed and clothe his men and prisoners, and to repair his ship. Thrown entirely upon his own resources through the poverty of the continental government and the

dishonoring of his draft by the commissioners, he sold his merchant prize in disregard of precedent and law, and with the proceeds provided food for his men and supplies for his ship.

"I am sure I will succeed in the end," he had said, and, in all the months of disheartening trials that were to follow, it was this spirit of unconquerable pluck and tenacity that carried him over every obstacle. He never surrendered, either to the enemy, or to the chances of fortune, or to moral opposition. And when he was forced, in compliance with an order received from Congress before leaving America, to hand over the command of the *Ranger* to her first lieutenant, Simpson, he still did not despair or repine. When the *Drake* set sail for home early in the fall of 1778, Paul Jones was left in a foreign land with no command and no prospect of a ship.

CHAPTER XX

THE "BON HOMME RICHARD"

WITH Paul Jones, to live meant to fight and to succeed. Failure meant to fight and to die. His present struggle was for a ship or a squadron, and he had against him countless intangible foes: the poverty of the American commissioners, the limited resources of the French marine and preference given to regular French officers, the fierce jealousy of the younger officers in the French navy, cabals, spies, and secret hostility. These were some of the "hindrances" that beset his path, and some of the "sinister facts" with which he had to contend. But even then he could still write: —

"Though my efforts to obtain a small squadron have not met with the success I had hoped for, I still hope and will, as always, persevere."

Unsupported and unassisted by his own government, alone in a foreign country, begging for foreign help, he had at least two powerful friends — the Duke de Chartres, eldest son of the Duke d'Orleans, and his wife, the Duchess de Chartres. By their advice he finally made a direct appeal to the king of France, and as a result of this appeal

received a letter from the minister of marine, announcing that "His Majesty has thought proper to place under your command the ship *Le Duras*, of forty guns, now at L'Orient."

Being thus provided with a ship by the king, and with generous financial help by the Duchess de Chartres, Paul Jones at once entered with characteristic energy and enthusiasm on the task of preparing for a cruise. The *Duras*, an old East Indiaman that had seen hard service, needed complete overhauling and equipping. Three months were consumed in preparing her for her new use and destination, and in enlisting a crew. Even then she was nothing better than a makeshift; her batteries were mounted with the refuse guns of the French government, the only ones obtainable, and her crew was mostly foreign. Of the three hundred and seventy-five men whom Jones was able to collect, only fifty were Americans, the rest were French, Portuguese, and British. But, before the final date of sailing, the exchange of British and American prisoners of war gave him the opportunity of replacing some of his alien seamen by one hundred and fourteen Americans.

It was August when all arrangements were completed, and the *Duras*, whose name had been changed by Jones to the *Bon Homme Richard*, out of compliment to Benjamin Franklin, was converted into a 40-gun man-of-war ready for sea. Jones writes of it: "I might have a better ship, and my

crew would be better if they were all Americans. But I am truly grateful for ship and crew as they are."

The squadron that sailed from L'Orient under the command of Commodore Jones counted, besides the *Richard* which was the chief and largest ship, the *Alliance*, Captain Landais, a 36-gun frigate, the *Pallas*, a 28-gun frigate, and the *Vengeance*, a 12-gun brig. These ships were commanded by French officers, and manned chiefly by French sailors. All excepting the *Alliance* belonged to the king of France, and French money paid the expenses of the expedition. Yet the ships sailed and the men fought under the American flag, and the French officers were, for the time, commissioned officers of the United States. The commander-in-chief of this motley armament was looked upon by the regular officers of the French navy as little more than an adventurer. It can readily be understood that under these circumstances the spirit among both officers and men was one of discontent, jealousy, sullenness, and insubordination.

Even these heterogeneous and ill-assorted elements might have been held in check by the unfettered and resolute control of a commander-in-chief with full liberty of action. But Paul Jones found himself limited in his powers and handicapped from the start. He was forced to sign an agreement, or concordat, which obliged

him to ask the advice of his captains instead of imposing on them his authority, and which practically gave each captain the power to act independently. Jones writes with some bitterness: "I have no real right to consider my flag-ship anything more than a convenient rendezvous where the captains of the other ships may assemble whenever it pleases them to do so, for the purpose of talking things over and agreeing — if they can agree — upon a course of sailing or a plan of operations from time to time."

After making a false start from L'Orient, and having to regain port for repairs, the squadron finally set sail from the road of Groiax "at daybreak on the 14th of August," 1779. The projected cruise was to draw a circle around the British Islands and end at the Texel. Heading for the west coast of Ireland, the little squadron sailed across the entrance to the English Channel and cleared the southernmost point of the Irish coast. The capturing of merchant prizes laden with cargoes of provisions, the desertion of twelve British seamen who had been sent ahead in a barge to tow the *Richard* off the dangerous reefs of the coast, the loss of Mr. Lunt, the master of the *Richard*, and ten seamen who had pursued the deserters too far inshore, the open insubordination and revolt of Captain Landais of the *Alliance* — these were the incidents that marked the first days of the cruise.

Through calms and gales and changing winds Jones worked his way up the west coast of Scotland, and then beat down the east coast as far as the Firth of Forth. Two letters of marque were captured in this run, manned, and sent to friendly ports. The *Alliance*, meanwhile, had separated from the squadron, her captain, Landais, having long ceased to regard signals or even to consult with the commander-in-chief and the other captains.

On the evening of the 13th of September the *Richard* sighted the hills of Cheviot, and on the following day captured two small prizes. From them Jones learned that the road of Leith was undefended except by an armed ship of twenty guns and two or three cutters. He at once determined to surprise the port and levy a contribution on the town or reduce it to ashes. A swift attack with a favorable wind would undoubtedly have resulted in success. But Jones was obliged to call on board the captains of the *Pallas* and the *Vengeance* and communicate his plan. Precious time was lost, and on the morning of the 17th, when the first attempt was made, a fierce storm prevented the lowering of the boats and drove the *Richard* off the coast. Captain Cottineau of the *Pallas*, unwilling to risk a second venture now that the alarm was given, urged the commodore to sail southward for Spurn Head. Jones acceded, though keenly disappointed at having his plan

frustrated. He had, at least, thoroughly aroused the entire coast of Fife.

A sail of three days brought the squadron to Spurn Head, and on the 22d of September the news of what was to turn a commonplace and uneventful cruise into one of the most stirring and wide-famed ones in history was brought to the commodore by the *Vengeance*. The large Baltic fleet laden with valuable naval stores for Great Britain had arrived under convoy, and lay waiting in Bridlington Bay for a favorable wind to carry it to the Downs.

The moment for which Paul Jones had worked and passionately longed had come at last. His "hope of performing some essential service" was to be realized. With the chance of his life before him, he was all energy and decision. Signalling his consorts to follow him, he headed northward for Flamborough Head. The run was made during the night of the 22d, and the following morning found him north of Bridlington Bay, beating up against a light southwest wind. It was slow work, and the *Richard* was still twelve miles out to sea when the entire Baltic fleet sailed out of the bay, running for the shelter of Scarborough and keeping close to the land.

From the masthead of the *Richard* flew the signal for a general chase. Then the merchant ships crowded sail, and the two escort ships stood out to protect them; it was their evident intention to

engage the strange vessels that threatened the convoy. In answer to this manœuvre Commodore Jones bore down under press of sail and signalled his squadron to form for battle. Only the *Pallas* answered. The *Alliance* paid no heed and kept seaward. The little *Vengeance* had already received the order, "Lie to, as you are; you are not big enough to bear a hand in this."

The two British escort ships were the *Serapis*, a new 44-gun frigate, and the sloop-of-war *Countess of Scarborough*. Captain Cottineau of the *Pallas* gave chase to the sloop which was running out to leeward to protect the convoy, and during the coming fight he was fully occupied in capturing and manning her. Paul Jones was thus left single-handed on an old, half-rotten makeshift of a ship, a slow sailer and difficult to handle, with a crew mostly foreign, and with worn-out guns, to face an antagonist fresh from the stocks, armed with a double battery and mounting new and heavy guns, of superior sailing powers and handy to manœuvre, manned by a perfectly trained crew, and commanded by Captain Pearson, a man of undoubted skill and courage.

Yet with these almost overwhelming disadvantages Jones was eager to meet his foe, and crowded every possible sail so as to reach him before night. It was seven o'clock in the evening before he came within pistol shot. As the *Richard* approached, Captain Pearson tried to make out her rate; his

first hail received no answer, and finally, after scanning her with his night-glass, he said to his first lieutenant: "It is probably Paul Jones. If so, there is work ahead!" His second hail was answered by a broadside.

The ships had closed to within six hundred feet of each other. A steady, light wind blew from the southwest. The sea was smooth. In the clear evening sky the harvest moon had just risen.

Almost simultaneously with the first broadside from the *Richard* came an answering one from the *Serapis*. Jones writes, in his report to Dr. Franklin, "The battle being thus begun was continued with unremitting fury." Broadside followed broadside as the two ships drifted with the light southwest wind at about a cable's distance from each other. At the first fire two of the six old eighteen-pounders on the lower gun-deck of the *Richard* burst and caused fearful damage. They formed part of the battery that Jones had improvised in the steerage, under the main deck, aft, and were worn-out guns declared unfit for service by the French authorities. The explosion killed and wounded most of the men belonging to the gun-crew, and demoralized the remainder, who refused to work the other eighteen-pounders. The lower gun-deck was then abandoned, and the broadsiding power of the *Richard* was thus at the outset reduced to one-third less than that of the *Serapis*.

Jones at once saw that his only hope was to grapple with the enemy. The heavy and well-trained fire from the lower tier eighteen-pounders on the British ship made fearful havoc. Man after man on the *Richard's* gun-deck dropped at his post, and several guns were silenced.

Drifting together as they advanced, the two ships slowly closed, and a false manœuvre of the *Serapis* brought her within reach of the musketry from the *Richard's* tops. At this moment Jones almost succeeded in closing with his antagonist and holding her fast with his grapnels; but the lines gave way, and the ships drifted apart.

The broadsiding was now renewed with fearful effect on the rotten timbers and the light metal of the *Richard*. Nine of her twelve-pounders had been abandoned, eighty men of the main battery had been killed or wounded. The condition of the deck was terrible. Only five guns were still in working order. Affairs below were even more alarming. The hull had been pierced by several eighteen-pound shot, and the water was pouring into the hold; it was already four feet deep and was increasing. The ship had sunk two feet.

At this point Commodore Jones exclaimed to his first lieutenant, Richard Dale: "Dick, his metal is too heavy for us at this business. He is hammering us all to pieces. We must close with him; we must get hold of him!"

It was his last chance, his only hope. By a

skilful manœuvre he rounded the bows of the *Serapis* and closed with her to within a hundred feet. The enemy's jib-boom ran over the *Richard's* poop-deck, was caught in her starboard mizzen-rigging and was lashed fast to the mizzenmast by the commodore himself. The two ships lay alongside of each other, their yards entangled, "and the cannon of each ship touching the opponent's." The starboard anchor of the *Serapis* hooked in the *Richard's* mizzen chains, and the antagonists swung together, grappled and locked in a firm embrace.

Commodore Jones had attained his object. It was time to profit by it. During this last manœuvre the main battery had been completely silenced and abandoned, while the great guns of the enemy's lower tier were smashing and crushing and driving in beams and planking. Only three of the quarter-deck nine-pounders were still serviceable. Mr. Mease, who commanded them, was severely wounded in the head. The French marines had lost their captain, and their lieutenants lay mortally wounded. The rank and file were discouraged and wavering. At this crisis Paul Jones sprang on to the quarter-deck and became at once the life and centre of the defence. He rallied the men at the battery, shifted over one of the guns himself, and directed the fire. Then he dashed among the French marines "like a tiger among calves," cheered and exhorted them in their own tongue with his great voice, and even took the loaded muskets

from their hands and set them an example of good firing. His French orderly of the day, writing an account of the battle, says: —

"They responded instantly to him. In an instant they were filled with courage. The indomitable spirit, the unconquerable courage of the commodore filled every soul, and every one who saw his example or heard his voice became as much a hero as himself. At that moment the fate of the combat was decided. Such was the power of one heart that knew no fear. Such the influence of one soul that knew the meaning of no other word than conquest."

The sole chance of victory lay in clearing the enemy's decks; everything depended on the unswerving aim of the sailors in the tops and the marines on the decks. If the enemy should succeed in casting off the lashings that held the ships together, the fate of the *Richard* would be sealed. The commodore bent all his energies to the defence of this grapple and to clearing the exposed decks. The enemy could no longer stand to his wheel or handle his sails. "It was instant death to any English sailor that tried to touch a brace, sheet, or halliard." Their forecastle was finally abandoned by officers and men.

The ships had grappled at eight o'clock. During all this time the *Alliance* had not been seen. At last, at half-past nine o'clock, she appeared, and Jones thought that the battle was over; with her

aid he could not fail to win. To his surprise and indignation Landais discharged a full broadside into the stern of the *Richard*. The commodore could not credit the Frenchman's treachery. He showed his signal of three lanterns in a horizontal line. Still the *Alliance* passed slowly round, firing deliberately into her consort's head, stern, and broadside. There was no possibility now of a mistake; it was clearly treachery. Several men on the *Richard* were killed, a number of shot pierced her sides below water, the leak increased, and the water gained in the hold.

Some of his officers tried to persuade Jones to strike, but his fierce resolve never to surrender still upheld him. Earlier in the action one of the under-officers, crazed with fear, called for quarter. The ensign had already been cut away by a shot, and hearing the cry, Captain Pearson hailed the commodore and asked if he demanded quarter. Jones replied vehemently that he had only just begun to fight. Afterward Pearson, during his court-martial, said of this incident: "This I at first thought to be mere bravado on his part. But I soon perceived that it was the defiance of a man desperate enough, if he could not conquer, to sink with his ship alongside."

The condition of the *Richard* was indeed desperate. Fire had broken out in the lower deck, and the flames spread among the splinters and wreckage to within a few feet of the magazine.

Five feet of water were in the hold, and the ship was slowly sinking. The master-at-arms, who was guarding more than two hundred British prisoners taken on prizes and confined below decks, thought the *Richard* was sinking and let them loose. Only fifty escaped, and these, with savage irony and marvellous presence of mind, Jones set to work on the pumps.

The resources of the commodore were not yet exhausted. Although the enemy's upper decks had been cleared, his lower tier, being covered, was still untouched. Jones now suggested the idea of dropping hand-grenades through his main hatch into the lower tier. The acting gunner, Midshipman Fanning, and two seamen were ordered to lay aloft to the maintop. Armed with two buckets of grenades and a slowmatch, the four lay out on the yard-arm. The hatch was only partly open, and the hole not more than two feet wide, but the main yard-arm of the *Richard* overhung it, and at the third trial Fanning succeeded in his aim. A fearful explosion followed the throw of the hand-grenade, the hatch of the *Serapis* was blown open, fifty men were killed or maimed, and the after part of the lower tier silenced.

It was at this point during the last scenes of the desperate fight that the *Alliance* bore down for the second time until within musket-shot of the *Richard*, and again raked the shattered and sinking

ship that was flying her own colors. Fired at alike by friend and foe, it seemed hopeless to persist, but Jones still held his last card in reserve. Seeing that the mainmast of the *Serapis* wavered, and that the enemy was beginning to flinch, he ordered a picked party of boarders to stand in readiness for the signal, armed with cutlasses and pistols, under the command of Acting Lieutenant John Mayrant. At last the signal was given, and they went over the rail.

The thirty desperate sailors who formed the boarding party plunged over the hammock netting and down into the fore part of the *Serapis*. Meeting with little opposition, they were soon in complete possession and rushing toward the quarter-deck. Captain Pearson, seeing the hopelessness of resistance, himself struck his flag.

Both ships were on fire, and the smoke, enveloping them in a dense cloud, increased the confusion twofold. It was some time before either side realized the situation. The first lieutenant of the *Serapis*, coming up from below, asked Captain Pearson, "Has the enemy struck, sir?" Pearson replied, "No, sir; I have struck."

It was half-past ten o'clock on the night of the 23d of September, 1779, when, for the first time, the British flag on a man-of-war was struck to the stars and stripes.

There was still much work to be done. The victorious *Richard*, a mass of wreckage, was fast

sinking. She had seven feet of water in her hold; the pumps, still manned by the British prisoners, were beginning to be choked, and several shot-holes were below the water line. Only one hundred unwounded men of her crew were left on board, nearly every gun was dismounted, her starboard side was completely driven in, and the flames were fast destroying the rest.

Nathaniel Fanning writes: "Such was the condition of the *Richard* when, sinking and on fire, she was still the conqueror, and could by signal command the ship that had destroyed her. Nothing like this has ever been known in the annals of naval warfare."

During the day after the battle all the wounded, to the number of a hundred and twenty, were removed to the *Serapis*, the prisoners were also transferred, but there was no time to save any of the ship's stores. Early on the morning of the 25th of September the *Richard* sank. Commodore Jones, in his journal, says: "No one was now left aboard the *Richard* but our dead. . . . Our torn and tattered flag was left flying when we abandoned her. As she plunged down by the head at the last, her taffrail momentarily rose in the air; so the very last vestige mortal eyes ever saw of the *Bon Homme Richard* was the defiant waving of her unconquered and unstricken flag as she went down."

The situation after the sinking of the *Richard*

was appalling. The *Serapis* had lost her mainmast; only one hundred and fifty men of the victorious crew were fit for service, and on them fell the work of repairing and manning the disabled *Serapis*, caring for two hundred and forty wounded, and guarding three hundred and twenty-two British prisoners. The little squadron consisted of the *Serapis*, the *Pallas* with her prize, the *Duchess of Scarborough*, and the *Vengeance*, nearly all more or less battered. They were off the enemy's coast, now thoroughly aroused, and several large men-of-war were on their track and looking for them. Fortunately a fog hid them and covered their movements, and then a stiff southwester began to blow off the coast.

Driven before the gale into the North Sea, for five days the crippled ships were tossed and beaten on the waves. One of those on board writes: "In the common danger enmity was forgotten and every one who could walk worked with a will to save the ship and their own lives." On the fifth day the wind abated and shifted to the northwest. Jones shaped his course for the coast of Holland, and ran into the Texel, where he anchored on the 3d of October.

CHAPTER XXI

FRENCH AND RUSSIAN HONORS

PAUL JONES arrived in Holland to be met by complicated troubles and diplomatic vexations. His first care was to deal with the rebellious captain of the *Alliance*, who had cast anchor in the Texel twenty-four hours before the commodore sailed into the Dutch port. Landais was at once suspended, and the command of the *Alliance* given to Degge, her first lieutenant. His next duty was to provide for the one hundred and fifty wounded British prisoners on board the *Serapis* and *Pallas*. After an appeal to the States-General, permission was granted him to land the wounded and have them cared for in Texel Fort.

Meanwhile the British ambassador at the Hague, Sir Joseph Yorke, was addressing memorials to the Dutch government, demanding the immediate seizure and restitution of the two British prizes that had been taken by "a certain Paul Jones . . . rebel, pirate, and state criminal." In the long diplomatic correspondence that followed, Commodore Jones gave proof of his cool judgment, calm, legal mind, and masterly handling of delicate international questions.

The result was a resolution passed by the States-General in which they refused to consider Paul Jones as a pirate or otherwise, and urged him to "depart with his prizes as soon as wind and weather would permit." But this was not all. Having settled with the Dutch authorities, Jones was next confronted by the representatives of France, who claimed the *Serapis* as a French prize. In the final outcome he was obliged to leave behind the *Pallas*, *Vengeance*, and *Countess of Scarborough*, and to give up the *Serapis*, reserving for himself only the American ship *Alliance*.

On the 25th of December Commodore Jones hoisted his flag on the *Alliance* and prepared to put to sea. But the British had not satisfied themselves with protests and correspondence. A squadron of seven sail was blockading the entrance to the Helder. Jones could not get out "except by running their gauntlet," and there seemed little chance of escape. But he watched his opportunity. "On Christmas Day an easterly gale began, which compelled the English fleet to make an offing." With the wind that drove the British off the coast, the *Alliance* sailed out of the harbor. Jones, with reckless daring, eluded the seven blockading ships, and shaped his course for the Straits of Dover, ran within full view of the British fleet in the Downs, and on the following day passed within range of the Channel fleet off Spithead, and sighted several large, two-decked cruising

ships. After revictualling his ship at Corunna on the coast of Spain, he sailed into the harbor of L'Orient on the 10th of February, 1780.

On finding that the skilful and audacious American commodore had escaped, Sir Joseph Yorke vented his discontent in an official despatch, in which he deplored that "His Majesty's blockading squadron had apparently been driven off the coast by a so-called gale, which Captain Jones obviously regarded as only a fair-sailing wind."

During the following months Paul Jones oversaw the complete refitting and overhauling of the *Alliance*, and made several journeys to Paris and Versailles. During one of these absences, when he was arranging for the settlement of prize moneys, the disgraced Landais conspired to usurp the command of the *Alliance*, seize the ship, and take her out to sea. Although the French authorities were ready to deal with the mutineers, even to the point of turning the guns of the fort on the ship and sinking her, Jones shrank from the horror and bloodshed, and allowed the ship to sail.

The summer of 1780 was divided by the commodore between attempts to obtain command of the *Serapis* and social festivities at Paris. His unexampled victory off Flamborough Head had spread the prestige of his name throughout the French capital. He was the lion in the highest circles of Parisian society, and was received in the most exclusive drawing-rooms of the nobility. Fêtes

and honors were showered upon him. The king presented him with a gold-mounted sword, and conferred on him the Royal Order of Military Merit, and the rank and title of Chevalier.

But the French contented themselves with conferring honors on the American hero, and while these gratified the commodore's vanity, they failed to satisfy his vehement and consuming longing for another opportunity to get "alongside the enemy." After repeated attempts to obtain the command of a ship or a squadron, and repeated failures through the cabals of French officers, Paul Jones finally sailed in the *Ariel* for the United States on the 18th of December, 1780, and two months later anchored at Philadelphia.

On his return to America as the conqueror and hero of one of the fiercest naval battles in history, and the only officer who had won brilliant naval victories in our war of independence, Paul Jones was treated with distinguished honor and marked favors. From Congress he received a vote of thanks "for the zeal, prudence, and intrepidity" with which he had supported "the honor of the American flag," and the eminent services by which he had "added lustre to the American arms." General Washington sent him a personal letter of congratulation and esteem. And on the 26th of June he was appointed to the command of the *America*, a large 74-gun line-of-battle ship then building at Portsmouth.

Great as was his satisfaction at the important command conferred upon him, Paul Jones was not destined to assume his new duties. After he had directed the work of the *America's* construction, and had seen her successfully launched, she was suddenly snatched from his grasp. Early in the month of September, Congress voted that the newly built ship be given to the king of France as a compensation for the loss of the French *Magnifique* which had been recently wrecked off Boston harbor.

Although Jones's disappointment was keen, he accepted the loss with grim and loyal cheerfulness. But the desperate spirit of the fighter that was ever astir within him, his restlessness and unquenchable desire for action, and his never satisfied ambition, made life on land impossible. Deprived of his new command, and with no prospect of active service in the continental navy as the war was now practically finished, he requested permission to volunteer in the French expedition to the West Indies. His request was granted, and in the last days of December, 1782, he sailed on board the flag-ship of the Marquis de Vaudreuil. Four months later news of the general peace brought the cruise to an end, and Jones again returned to America.

His next mission was a pacific, diplomatic, and complex one. He was appointed by Congress special agent to collect all prize-moneys due by

France to American seamen who had served under his orders, and on the 10th of November, 1783, he set sail for France. The next three years and a half were spent in Paris, London, and Copenhagen in the discharge of his duties as plenipotentiary — duties which were prosaic, it is true, but which were also difficult and demanded tact and diplomatic handling.

Early in the summer of 1787 he returned for the last time to the United States. His arrival was in many ways a triumphal entry, and during his short stay of four months honors and attentions of all kinds were showered upon him. He was fêted and entertained by the most distinguished men and women of the land. Congress voted that a medal of gold be struck and presented to him in commemoration of his valor and brilliant services. It was a period when, almost for the first time, full and spontaneous justice was done to his extraordinary powers and achievements. When in the fall of 1787 he bid what was to be his last farewell to his adopted country, he carried with him some of the pleasantest memories of his restless and exciting life. On the morning of the 11th of November he boarded the packet *Governor Clinton* and sailed out of New York harbor, bound for England and the Continent.

The news that greeted him on his arrival in Paris was to no small degree startling. It was an unofficial invitation to accept an appointment in

the Russian naval service. This was soon afterward followed by a flattering offer from the Empress Catharine II herself, which he received while he was at Copenhagen.

Early in April, 1788, Commodore and Chevalier Paul Jones accepted the commission of rear-admiral in the Russian navy, and started at once for the new field of work that had so unexpectedly opened before him. He reached St. Petersburg on the 23d of April, after a stormy and dangerous journey across the ice-bound Baltic Sea to the Gulf of Finland, and overland from Revel to the seat of the imperial court.

The sixteen months of Admiral Jones's stay in Russia formed one of the most painful and one of the stormiest periods in his eventful life. It added little to his already preëminent naval renown except by showing that the victor of the fiercest battle between single ships was also capable of the broader responsibility and wider knowledge called for in the command of fleets. It involved him in a net of intrigues and conspiracies, falsehood, misrepresentation, and injustice. It brought him into contact with men who in character, aims, and practices were wholly out of touch with and antagonistic to his inflexible honesty, fidelity in service, and stern principles of right.

His reception by the Empress at the Russian capital had been flattering and captivating to the romantic spirit of Paul Jones, and it was with hope-

ful energy and enthusiasm that he travelled post-haste across Russia to gain the seat of operations in the war against the Turks. But he early found himself fettered by limitations, surrounded by cabals, and disheartened by jealousies which brought him to the verge of exasperation and disgust.

On reaching the headquarters of Prince Potemkin on the borders of the Black Sea, Admiral Jones was assigned to the command of the squadron of Kherson, composed of nineteen ships of war. Two of these were rated as ships of the line, the rest as frigates and smaller vessels of war. They were poorly built, badly equipped, and manned with raw, ignorant, and insufficient crews.

With this unsatisfactory force it was Admiral Jones's mission to act in conjunction with the army of the famous Russian general, Suwarrow, in his operations against Oczakoff, by blockading the water approaches to this military and naval stronghold and by attacking the naval forces of the Turks in the Black Sea.

Early on the morning of the 17th of June Admiral Jones, with his flag flying from the masthead of the *Vladimir*, engaged the Turkish fleet under the command of Reis Dejazet, Capitan Pacha, and after sixteen hours of fighting won a complete victory — the only naval victory of note in the campaign of the Liman. But his fearless and uncompromising sincerity in rendering his report of the battle roused the implacable enmity of the

commander-in-chief and ruined his future in the Russian service.

On his return to St. Petersburg, where he was recalled by imperial order, Empress Catharine received him with marked consideration and favor. She created him vice-admiral, half promised him the command of the Baltic fleet, decorated him with the Order of St. Anne, and lavished upon him every flattering attention. But his enemies, who followed him to court, strove with unremitting villany and animosity to compass his ruin. After persecutions that embittered his spirit, and a severe attack of pneumonia contracted in the cold of the northern seas that undermined his health, the Empress gave him leave of absence, and on the 18th of August, 1787, he started on a long and leisurely journey across Europe.

On reaching Paris, a consultation of physicians pronounced his left lung seriously affected, and urged the necessity of winters spent in a warm climate. Fortunately for the untrammelled spirit of Paul Jones, he did not long survive his shattered bodily strength. But while his physical health was crippled beyond restoration, his mental grasp and energy were still in their full intensity and vigor. During the next two years, which were spent mostly at Paris, he kept up his lively interest in public affairs, and was in close and constant intercourse with the prominent public men of those tumultuous times.

In the spring of 1792 Admiral Jones sent his final resignation to Empress Catharine and severed all connection with the Russian navy. He had at that time the expectation of an appointment as admiral in the French navy — an honor which would have been conferred upon him by the National Convention in the fall of 1792 — and he was already looking forward with unabated eagerness to the opportunity of leading the ships and sailors of republican France against the fleets of Great Britain.

"Would that I were strong as when I long ago brought to France the news of Liberty's first great victory in the New World! But ill as I am, there is yet something left of the man. . . . I am now ready to act whenever and wheresoever bidden by the voice of France." These were his last public words spoken a week before his death. His body was rapidly failing, but his spirit was still strong as when he drove the little *Ranger* across the seas.

At nine o'clock, on the evening of the 18th of July, 1792, Paul Jones died, with the victorious colors of his "unconquered and unstricken" spirit flying until the end.

VISCOUNT LORD HORATIO NELSON

1758–1805

VISCOUNT LORD HORATIO NELSON

CHAPTER XXII

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SEA HERO

THERE has been perhaps no moment in history when times and events stood so ready for the kindling match of a supreme genius as when Nelson came upon the scene. Great men are born to great emergencies, and nature and opportunity, in complete accord, united to bring forth the greatest sea hero whom the world has known. His life was a perfect drama in its happy rise, its glorious course, and its end in the hour of victory and of the full completion of his mission.

His work was so perfected that he not only made "England mistress of the seas" during his lifetime, but bequeathed to her at his death that naval supremacy which she has held undisputed for a hundred years.

He was the personification of naval genius; an heroic spirit; a soul enthusiastic, daring, triumphant; a mind single, clear, unerring; a heart full of patriotic zeal and devotion; with scarcely enough body to keep him upon the earth.

Horatio Nelson was born on the 29th of September, 1758.[1] His father, Edmund Nelson, was rector of Burnham Thorpe, in Norfolk, on the eastern coast of England. His mother, Catherine Suckling, a descendant of the famous Walpoles, was the sister of Captain Maurice Suckling, under whom Nelson first went to sea.

His schooling was scant, first at the high school at Norwich and afterward at North Walsham. Although of a weak and sickly constitution, with little bodily strength or endurance, his ambition from boyhood was to be a seaman, and when in 1770 he heard that his uncle, Maurice Suckling, had been appointed to the command of the *Raisonnable*, and was to sail for the Falkland Islands, he begged to be allowed to go with him. Captain Suckling's well-known exclamation, on hearing that his nephew was to accompany him, did not augur a brilliant future. "What has poor little Horatio done, that he, being so weak, should be sent to rough it at sea? But let him come, and if a cannon-ball takes off his head, he will at least be provided for."

The ship on which Nelson thus opened his naval career at twelve years of age was soon put out of commission, the difference with Spain in connection

[1] Nelson's *Letters and Despatches*, selected and edited by J. K. Laughton, have formed the basis of this sketch. The most masterly and complete work on Nelson is the *Life* by Captain A. T. Mahan.

with the group of islands off Patagonia in the South Atlantic having been settled without recourse to war. Captain Suckling was transferred to the *Triumph*, which was stationed as guard-ship in the Medway, and took with him young Horatio, who had lost his mother, and for whom he had promised to provide. But the restless and ambitious sailor lad did not long remain in inactive harbor life. His first voyage was on a West Indian merchantman, on which he learned the essentials of his profession. From this cruise of one year he returned a practical seaman with ample nautical knowledge, but also with a horror of the royal navy. To dispel this prejudice, his uncle gave him active pilot work on the Thames, from Chatham to the North Foreland, a splendid training in confidence and self-dependence.

In 1773 an expedition was fitted out by the Royal Society to sail to the North Pole, and Nelson used every effort to be taken in some capacity on the voyage. As no boys were allowed by the admiralty, he went as coxswain to Captain Lutwidge of the *Carcass*, and learned the navigation of the ice-bound seas.

On his return from his Arctic expedition Nelson was fifteen years old, and already an able seaman. Yet his thirst for maritime knowledge was far from satisfied, and he at once applied for a position in the squadron under Admiral Hughes, which was about to sail for the East Indies. In the *Seahorse*

of twenty guns he embarked with Captain Farmer, as a foremast hand and watched in the foretop. Afterward he was promoted to the quarter-deck and rated as midshipman. In this voyage he covered a wide range of experience, visiting the East Indies from Bengal to Bussorah during a period of two years. But so long a cruise among those fever-stricken, marshy shores nearly proved fatal to him. His delicate health was completely undermined, and a long illness left him weak and reduced to almost a skeleton. He attributes the saving of his life to Admiral Hughes, who sent him home to England in the *Dolphin*, and to the care of Captain James Pigot, who nursed him with friendly devotion.

Reaching home in September, 1776, after a three years' cruise, we find him in two days going to sea again on the *Worcester* as acting lieutenant. The ship was bound for Gibraltar on convoy duty, and it was then that Nelson had his first sight of the Mediterranean and of the Straits, the future scene of some of his bitterest trials and most glorious victories.

Hardly had he returned home after six months of convoy duty than he successfully passed his examinations for lieutenant, on the 9th of April, 1772, when he was nineteen years of age, and on the following day received his commission as second lieutenant to the *Lowestoffe*, a frigate of thirty-two guns. To Captain William Locker of

the *Lowestoffe* Nelson owed valuable counsel and instruction, and, what was still better, he formed with him a devoted and life-long friendship. On the *Lowestoffe* Nelson sailed to the West Indies, where he made himself a "complete pilot for all the passages through the (Keys) Islands situated on the north side of Hispaniola."

It was of this time that he afterward relates the story of his intrepid boarding of an American letter of marque. The first lieutenant had been ordered to board the prize, but the sea ran so high that it was impossible for him to reach her. Captain Locker exclaimed, "Have I no officer in the ship who can board the prize?" Whereupon Nelson pushing aside the master, who had offered to go, with the word, "It is my turn now, and if I come back, it is yours," jumped into the boat, and after a hard fight secured the prize. In his narrative Nelson adds, "It is my disposition that difficulties and dangers do but increase my desire of attempting them."

This was indeed one of his earliest and most enduring traits. In his fragile health, which twice during his career entirely deprived him of the use of his limbs, he had a constant and harassing "difficulty," that he did not so much overcome as thrust aside. At one time on his return voyage from the West Indies, when illness had emaciated his puny body, he for a moment felt with overpowering despondency the great

hindrance of his physical weakness, the almost insurmountable obstacles he must meet with in his profession, and the small interest he had to win promotion. His ambition consumed him, but his mind could see no way to fulfil it. "After a long and gloomy revery, in which I almost wished myself overboard, a sudden flow of patriotism was kindled within me and presented my king and country as my patrons. My mind exulted in the idea. 'Well, then,' I exclaimed, 'I will be a hero, and, confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger.'" In those early years, and throughout his entire life, fame and duty were the two thoughts that appealed to him most strongly, and were the source of his most ardent inspiration: renown luring him ever onward like a "radiant orb," and duty kindling in him the most unswerving and fearless devotion.

That he had strong resolve and self-reliance, we can see from the fact that he always took the initiative in seeking the positions he desired. A very fire of energy burned within him, which never allowed him a day's inaction even after a protracted cruise. He had a daring and an enthusiasm which led him to court obstacles and dangers for the joy of overcoming them, not from a sense of physical strength, as with many men, but from a mental scorn of difficulties. He had marvellous self-concentration by which he could mobilize every faculty upon the one duty of the

moment. He had the determination to win, which made him once exclaim, "I shall live to be envied, and to that point I shall always direct my course."

Nelson's promotion was swift. From the *Lowestoffe* he was transferred in July, 1778, to the *Bristol*, the flag-ship of the commander-in-chief, Sir Peter Parker, and in less than three months rose from third lieutenant to first. In the following December he was appointed commander of the *Badger*, brig, and in June, 1779, was made post-captain in the *Hinchingbrook*, frigate. During these many changes and promotions his service had been mostly confined to cruising among the West Indies, more especially Jamaica, and on the Mosquito coast of Central America, which was being harassed by American privateers. In an expedition against Fort San Juan, on the river which connects Lake Nicaragua with the sea, Nelson showed his characteristic zeal, activity, and scorn of difficulties. Leading the troops and sailors a hundred miles up the river, he carried by assault an outpost of the enemy, erected batteries, and pointed almost every gun that was fired.

But service in a malignant region, where tropical exhalations poisoned the air, and the muddy swamps reeked with miasma, almost cost him his life. When he was appointed to the *Janus*, he was so weakened by sickness and exertion, that on his arrival at Jamaica he had to be carried on

shore on a cot. A long and painful illness ended in his return to England in the *Lion*, and several months spent at Bath in slow recovery.

Scarcely convalescent, Nelson was commissioned for the *Albermarle*, and was sent on convoy duty to the Baltic, and afterward to Newfoundland, Quebec, and Cape Cod. Toward the close of 1782 he asked to be transferred to Lord Hood's squadron bound for the Caribbean Sea. "The West Indies is the station for honor," he said. Prize-money he scorned. He writes later, "True honor, I hope, predominates in my mind far above riches." By choosing always the road to future distinction, he was, in these years of unimportant detail service, pressing on to that short but brilliant and glorious career which opened in 1793 in the Mediterranean, under Lord Hood, to whom he had with prophetic and deliberate choice attached himself more than ten years before.

These ten years, from twenty-five to thirty-five, were still uneventful in active service, being taken up chiefly with the long cruise of the *Boreas* in the West Indies, where he "destroyed the contraband trade," and brought to light "frauds practised in the colonies" — an ungrateful task which he attempted at the promptings of high principle and loyalty, but which brought upon him deep vexation and more censure than appreciation from the admiralty.

For this and for political reasons Nelson fell

for a time into disfavor; and no influence at court or in high admiralty circles could secure him from professional neglect. Active employment was the prime requirement of his temperament, the sole means of embodying his genius, and of reaching the goal of his aspirations — honor and fame. To deny him exertion, to keep him in stagnant inaction, was to inflict upon him the severest mortification and disappointment. But even under this exasperating indifference, Nelson preserved his unalloyed loyalty to his country, to his profession, and to his ideal. "It is much better," he says, "to serve an ungrateful country than to give up his own fame . . . a uniform conduct of honor and integrity seldom fails of bringing a man to the goal of fame at last."

Neither did he fail to seek, as he had always sought of his own initiative, some sort of employment; and he writes to the admiralty, "If your Lordships should be pleased to appoint me to a cockle-boat, I shall feel grateful."

Under stress of danger Nelson's appointment, so long and ardently desired, at last came to him. The aggressive attitude assumed by the French republic after the excesses of the Revolution and the abolition of royalty culminated in the first week of 1793. The declaration of war against Great Britain and Holland was issued by the republic on February 1st. Two days earlier, Nelson had been appointed to the *Agamemnon*, a 64-gun ship.

The fulfilment of Nelson's hope brought out in him that sanguine cheerfulness, that certainty of success, that idealization of men and circumstances, which characterized him throughout his life. "We are all well," he writes in his home letters; "indeed, nobody could be ill with my ship's company, they are so fine a set. . . . I have the pleasure of telling you that my ship is, without exception, the finest sixty-four in the service, and has the character of sailing most remarkably well."

In character Nelson showed at all periods of his career a generous, even enthusiastic, appreciation of his inferiors, a kindliness and confidence that won the ready and willing service of those under him. The charm and sweetness of his manner had a power to please and to win attachment which was irresistible. With the necessity he felt for the approbation of others went, hand in hand, his sympathy and consideration for those who looked up to him as commander.

These qualities were nowhere more strikingly brought out than when he was captain of the *Agamemnon*, whose officers and men were united in the bonds of a common purpose, hope, and inspiration.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

THE opening scene in Nelson's active fighting career was laid in the Mediterranean, whose waters were thenceforth to be inseparably connected with his name. Lord Hood, who was in command of the Mediterranean fleet, after many delays sailed in June for Gibraltar and from there to Toulon, with fifteen ships of the line, among which was the *Agamemnon*.

On the 16th of July, 1793, the fleet stood close into Toulon. The expectation of being joined by the squadron of their allies, the Spaniards, had failed. At Cadiz, Nelson writes that Spain had very fine ships, but that they were shockingly manned, and he adds, "The dons may make fine ships; they cannot, however, make men." As it proved, the Spanish admiral sent word that nineteen hundred of his men were sickly, and that he must go to Cartagena. This defection left the British fleet inferior to that of the French.

Marseilles and Toulon were invested by the British, and not even a boat could get in with provisions; yet it was with profound amazement

that news of the surrender to Lord Hood of Toulon, twenty-two ships of the line, and the dockyards without the firing of a single shot, was received throughout Europe.

Nelson had meanwhile been sent on a detached command to Corsica, and reached San Fiorenzo Bay early in December. The island of Corsica, which had been lately ceded to France by Genoa, was in a state of open revolt against the French republic. Paoli, the famous insurgent leader, was anxious for the help of the British, and Lord Hood realized the strategic importance of the island and the desirability of making it a British possession. He had for this reason despatched Nelson to blockade the ports of Bastia on the east coast of Corsica, Calvi on the west, and San Fiorenzo on the north — the three seaports held by the French revolutionary troops. Later, after the evacuation of Toulon by the British, Lord Hood brought his fleet to what had become the scene of action in the war.

In the reduction of Corsica, Nelson took a prominent though necessarily subordinate part. Before the arrival of his commander-in-chief he had so successfully invested the shore and blockaded the vessels in San Fiorenzo Bay that he contributed largely to the reduction of the place by the fleet. Active in harassing the coast, he destroyed merchant vessels, burned mills, and seized stores of wine and flour. By blockading the harbor of Bastia, reconnoitring the forts and town, and

furnishing Lord Hood with a detailed description of the defences, he was the principal means of its capture.

He felt sure that five hundred troops, with the *Agamemnon* and frigates, could silence the batteries and carry the town by assault. This opinion he repeatedly urged on Lord Hood. He writes home to England: "Not to attack our enemy I should consider as a national disgrace." Although General Dundas and his successor in command of the army, General d'Aubant, both refused to make the attack, on the ground that it was "a most visionary and rash attempt," Nelson's advice finally prevailed.

On the 3d of April, 1794, he landed with twelve hundred troops and two hundred and fifty seamen, and began the siege of Bastia. His letters to Mrs. Nelson show at this time his exultant enthusiasm, his unshaken belief in success which swept obstacles before it, and his indomitable courage. He writes from before Bastia: "Recollect that a brave man dies but once, a coward all his life long. . . . I have no fears about the final issue of the expedition; it will be victory — Bastia will be ours."

On the 30th of May forty-five hundred French troops laid down their arms to twelve hundred British soldiers who were serving as marines. The British took possession of the town, seventy-five pieces of ordnance, a man-of-war, and an incredible amount of stores. "All has been done by

seamen," Nelson triumphantly exclaims. In the whole operation of the siege he was the prime mover, the cause of success, the vivid, heroic spirit who inspired every man beneath him.

A fortnight after the fall of Bastia Nelson, in the *Agamemnon*, with two smaller war-ships, twenty-two transports and fifteen hundred troops, arrived off Calvi, the last of the hostile ports. The disembarking began on the 19th of June. The landing-place was bad; to avoid the rocks the *Agamemnon* anchored a mile from the shore; a gale of wind and rain separated the landing party from all communication with the ships; the guns, mortars, and howitzers were dragged by seamen up the steep acclivity and a mile and a half to the spot agreed upon for the attack. Throughout the long and tedious operation Nelson was active and zealous, and at the batteries he did duty on alternate days.

Although not taking so prominent a part as at the siege of Bastia, much of the success of the operation was due to his sagacity and disinterested devotion to duty. He held, besides, a position of trust and influence as the intermediary between Lord Hood, with whom he kept in daily communication, and General Stuart, who commanded the land forces.

Although hampered by an insufficient number of troops and seamen, and a want of powder and shot, the batteries did such good work that the outposts of the enemy fell into the hands of the British on the 19th of July, and on the 10th of

August Calvi surrendered. Nelson, writing to the Duke of Clarence on that day, speaks of the deadly climate. He says: "It is now what we call the dog-days, here it is termed the lion sun; no person can endure it; we have upwards of one thousand sick out of two thousand, and the others not much better than so many phantoms." Nelson himself did not succumb to the general prostration. The exaltation of action seemed to preserve his body. He was, however, wounded while serving at the batteries, "in a slight manner," according to him. A shot from the enemy drove a large quantity of sand into his right eye. Although the wound did not at first appear serious, it ended by completely depriving him of the sight of the eye. At Bastia he had received a cut in the back, but he exults in the fact that his hurts had not confined him more than a day.

Besides his wounds, the operations in Corsica cost him £300 sterling, and what was still more bitter to endure, he received only neglect and lack of recognition from high quarters. But here the nobility of his nature sustained him with the consciousness of duty well performed. To his wife and to his uncle he writes: "However services may be received, it is not right in an officer to slacken his zeal for his country. . . . I have ever served faithfully, and ever has it been my fate to be neglected; but that shall not make me inattentive to my duty. I have pride in doing my

duty well." And in regard to prize-money he writes to Mrs. Nelson: "Corsica, in respect of prizes, produces nothing but honor far above the consideration of wealth. I trust my name will stand on record when the money-makers will be forgot."

Five days after the fall of Calvi the *Agamemnon* sailed for Leghorn and lay there for a month; this was her first resting-place since she had been commissioned eighteen months before. The crew were sick and disabled, and Nelson hoped to return to England with Lord Hood, whose command in the Mediterranean was to be handed over to Vice-admiral Hotham. Lord Hood, in fact, offered to transfer him to a seventy-four, but his loyalty to his ship and to his men led him to decline the offer.

The *Agamemnon*, therefore, remained in the Mediterranean with the fleet under Lord Hotham. A wearisome winter it was, divided between watching the French fleet at Toulon, lying for a month in port at Leghorn for repairs, and a long winter cruise interspersed with partial engagements. In all of these actions the *Agamemnon* was always foremost, and on the 13th of March, 1795, was the only ship to engage unsupported the *Ça Ira*, and to sustain an intrepid fight within sight and almost within gunshot of the entire French fleet.

During the summer months of 1795 Nelson was in command of a detached squadron on the Riviera of Genoa. The mission was in a measure one of distinction, as it was difficult from both a naval

and a diplomatic standpoint; but it brought no active fighting and no events of importance. In December the *Agamemnon* went to Leghorn for extensive repairs. Nelson's attachment to this ship had made him unwilling to abandon her, even though he calls her "a rotten ship," and we are told that "her hull was kept together by cables," and not "a yard, mast, or sail" but needed repair, owing to the shot she had received.

The opening of 1796 was marked by Nelson's first meeting with the commander-in-chief with whom his name was to be so intimately associated, Sir John Jervis, afterward Earl St. Vincent, who had succeeded to the command of the Mediterranean fleet.

In June, Nelson was transferred to the *Captain*, a 74-gun ship, and ran up his commodore's pennant. Toward the close of the year, Corsica was evacuated by the British, and on the 2d of November the British fleet quitted the Mediterranean and retired to Gibraltar.

The chief event which marked the opening of 1797 was the first important naval action connected with the name of Nelson, the battle of Cape St. Vincent, fought against the Spaniards, the allies of France. At dawn, on the 14th of February, the British fleet of fifteen ships of the line, under Sir John Jervis, lay twenty-five miles west of Cape St. Vincent on the southern coast of Portugal. The morning was thick, but soon after eight o'clock

the fog lifted, and the lookouts on the British fleet descried the on-coming sail of the grand fleet of Spain. It was a formidable sight: twenty-seven huge ships, among them the great *Santissima Trinidad* of one hundred and twenty-six guns, and the *San Josef* of one hundred and twelve guns. One was a four-decker, the largest ship afloat, and seven were three-deckers, all carrying over one hundred and twelve guns. Divided in two separate sections, the Spanish ships were ranged in an awkward line of battle, and seemed unable to unite.

At daylight the British admiral made the signal to prepare for battle, at eleven o'clock to form the line, and at half-past eleven the action began. Nelson's ship was thirteenth in the line. The plan of Sir John was to run between the two divisions of the enemy's fleet and thus prevent their junction. This he succeeded in doing, and after a brisk cannonading he made the signal to "tack in succession." At this point Nelson's wonderful resolution, quickness, and independence, his power to see and seize a fleeting opportunity, assured the victory.

Seeing that it was the intention of the Spanish admiral to run behind the British column and unite his divisions, Nelson, without order or signal, passed from the rear, between the *Diadem* and *Excellent*, and reaching the Spanish column before the British van could possibly have come up, he engaged single-handed the huge *Santissima Trini-*

dad. Soon the *Culloden*, leader of the British van, came to his support, and for an hour the two plucky British ships engaged unaided nine line-of-battle ships of the enemy. Afterward the *Blenheim* and the *Excellent* joined them, and compelled the *San Ysidro* and the *Salvador del Mundo* to strike.

Nelson's ship, the *Captain*, was a wreck in hull and masts, "not a sail, shroud, or rope left, her wheel shot away, and incapable of further service in the line or in chase." She was at this time alongside the *San Nicolas*, and Nelson calling for the boarders ordered them to board the enemy. Captain Berry was the first to leap on to the Spanish liner, and Nelson himself soon followed. The soldiers of the sixty-ninth regiment were foremost on the service. A few volleys were exchanged, Berry got possession of the poop and hauled down the Spanish colors, and Nelson on the forecastle received the swords of the Spanish officers.

At this moment the *San Josef* opened fire on the British in the *San Nicolas*. Nelson promptly called for reënforcements from the *Captain*, and from the deck of the enemy's ship boarded a first-rate three-decker. Scarcely had Nelson entered the second Spanish ship than an officer leaned over the rail and called out that they surrendered, "and on the quarter-deck of a Spanish first-rate, extravagant as the story may seem, did I receive the

swords of vanquished Spaniards," writes Nelson in his account of the action.

Later the *Victory*, Jervis's flag-ship, passed the group of the disabled *Captain* and its two magnificent prizes, and saluted with three cheers, as did every ship in the fleet.

Leaving his worn-out ship, Nelson hoisted his pennant first on the *Minerve*, and later on the *Irresistible;* but the day was too far advanced for further action. Sir Gilbert Elliot wrote afterward to Nelson: "To have had any share in yesterday's glory is honor enough for one man's life; but to have been foremost on such a day could fall to your share alone."

Before the news of Nelson's brilliant action reached England, he had already been promoted to the rank of rear-admiral of the Blue; but when his gallant and successful conduct in the glorious victory of St. Valentine's Day was fully known in high circles, he was invested with the Knighthood of the Bath — an honor he greatly coveted.

Close upon this victory followed the blockade and bombardment of Cadiz. Nelson, who had shifted his flag to the *Theseus*, was in command of the inner squadron numbering ten ships of the line, and upon him devolved all the active duties and responsibilities of the blockade. The bombardment, which was intended to force the Spanish fleet to come out and fight, resulted in nothing more than a sharp encounter at close quarters be-

tween the Spanish and British launches, in which Nelson distinguished himself by his personal courage more perhaps than at any other period of his life.

By a vigorous and gallant attack the British so successfully repelled the sortie of Spanish mortar-gunboats and armed launches that they were driven back close under the walls of Cadiz. Nelson, always generous, and warmly appreciative of his subordinates, gives on this occasion the highest praise to the noble conduct of his officers and men.

On the 14th of July, 1797, Nelson received orders to sail for Santa Crux. It had been with him for some time a favorite and well-meditated project to make a dash on Teneriffe, one of the islands of the Canary group, and seize the Spanish treasure-ships that had, he believed, sought shelter there; $35,000,000 was worth an attempt at capture.

While the British fleet lay before Cadiz, Jervis had received information that a ship belonging to the Philippine Company, *El Principe d'Asturias*, bound from Manila to Cadiz, and laden with rich treasure belonging to the crown of Spain, was at Santa Crux. This was the opportunity to put into execution Nelson's plan, which he had, some time previously, laid before the admiral.

Placed in command of four line-of-battle ships, three frigates carrying the landing party a thousand strong under Captain Troubridge, and one

cutter, Nelson sailed for Santa Crux in the middle of July on the expedition that was to be the first failure of his career — one that cost him deep mortification and great physical suffering.

He had planned a vigorous and sudden attack. The boats, with the troops and the scaling ladders, were ordered to land in the night, but a heavy gale of wind and a strong current prevented them from approaching the shore until daybreak. As the surprise, under cover of the darkness, could not be carried out, the party returned to the ships, which were now clearly visible to the Spaniards. It was next proposed to storm the heights behind the fort, while the battle-ships let fly their batteries; but calms and contrary currents kept the large ships out of range.

The honor of his country required, Nelson thought, a last although hopeless attempt. He afterward wrote: "Although I felt the second attack a forlorn hope, yet the honor of our country called for the attack, and that I should command it. I never expected to return." His pride had suffered in the failure of the first attempt, and his regret was all the more keen since he believed, and no doubt rightly, that had he led it in person it would have been crowned with complete success. On the 24th of July, a few hours before the second attempt, he wrote to Jervis: "To-morrow my head will probably be crowned with either laurel or cypress." There

was, indeed, small hope of success. The Spaniards had had four days in which to strengthen their works and increase the number of their troops. They were well prepared for a vigorous defence.

At eleven o'clock at night the boats carrying about seven hundred and fifty men advanced toward the town, headed by Nelson, who led the way in his barge. The place of landing was to be the mole, and after that point had been carried, the troops were to form in the square. Scarcely were the boats within half gunshot of the mole than they were discovered, and a sharp fire of forty pieces of cannon and musketry opened upon them from one end of the town to the other.

The night was dark, and the surf high. Many of the boats missed the landing; they were full of water in a minute, and stove against the rocks. The ladders were all lost in the surf, and the ammunition was wet and useless. Meanwhile Nelson, with four or five boats, stormed the mole and took possession of it, although it was defended by almost five hundred men. But the heavy fire from the citadel and town did such havoc among the British seamen that they were forced to retreat.

A grapeshot struck Nelson in the right elbow as he was about to land on the mole. His stepson, Josiah Nisbet, placed him in the bottom of a boat, bound his wound tightly, and pushed back to the ships. As they were pulling over the stormy sea, a shot struck the cutter *Fox* under water, and

she went down with all on board. Nelson, although suffering at the time from intense pain, insisted on waiting to try and save the men who were struggling in the water.

When they finally reached the *Theseus*, a rope was thrown over and with wonderful spirit he jumped up the ship's side, declining all assistance, and called to the surgeon to bring his instruments, for he knew his arm must be amputated.

The feeling of bitterness over his failure and the loss of his arm can be seen in his letters to the commander-in-chief. He writes, a few days after the attack: "I am become a burthen to my friends and useless to my country. When I leave your command, I become dead to the world; I go hence, and am no more seen." And three weeks later he said: "A left-handed admiral will never again be considered as useful."

Yet it was after this, when he went forth again a one-eyed and one-armed admiral, that the glorious lustre of his renown was to burst suddenly into flame and to burn undimmed to the end.

Nelson was given leave on the 20th of August to return home for the recovery of his wound, and after a painful voyage, during which he suffered agonies from the imperfect amputation, he reached Spithead in September. With how much truth he could say, "Success covers a multitude of blunders, and the want of it hides the greatest gallantry and good conduct." In spite of his despondency and

bitter distress, and while still suffering torture from his poor stump, he writes to Jervis, now Lord St. Vincent, in the following October, "The moment I am cured, I shall offer myself for service."

On the 19th of December the *Vanguard*, a 74-gun ship, was commissioned at Chatham, and on the 29th of March, 1798, Nelson, now entirely recovered, hoisted his flag as rear-admiral of the Blue. In April he again sailed for the Mediterranean, and on the last day of the month joined Lord St. Vincent off Cadiz.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BATTLE OF THE NILE

THE period of Nelson's brief and dazzling course, which carried him to the highest pinnacle of renown, and left him the prince and master of the sea, covered eight short but eventful years.

Nelson was thirty-nine when he sailed forth to win the trio of his marvellous triumphs — Aboukir, Copenhagen, Trafalgar. He was forty-seven when he died in the fulness of his glory and the completion of his work.

History had been preparing his opportunity. A crisis in European politics was imminent. At the moment when he joined the fleet off the coast of Spain, in April, 1798, a turning-point in the policy of the two chief opponents was fast approaching. France, who had made peace with most of the continental powers and had extended her influence over all adjoining countries, was concentrating her forces against Great Britain with the avowed purpose of destroying the British monarchy. Active preparations were being urged forward in the seaport towns on the Mediterranean, both at the

southern ports of France and at the friendly ports of Italy. Ships of the line, transports, and troops were assembling in large numbers, and an extensive naval expedition was evidently being planned. This enterprise, which afterward proved to be the famous expedition of General Bonaparte to Egypt, was kept such a profound secret that its destination was not even surmised by the British. But the British government was sufficiently alarmed to decide on abandoning its purely defensive policy and adopting an active offensive attitude.

Hardly had Nelson reached Cadiz, therefore, when Lord St. Vincent placed under his command two ships of the line, the *Orion* and the *Alexander*, and four frigates, and sent him to watch Toulon and follow the movements of the French fleet. This was the first step in the memorable campaign of the Nile.

From off Cape Sicie, Nelson reported to the commander-in-chief that nineteen sail of the line lay in the harbor of Toulon, that vessels with troops frequently arrived from Marseilles, that twelve thousand men were already embarked, and that report said the armament was to sail in a few days. By an unfortunate mishap the French fleet slipped out of harbor unknown to Nelson. On the night of the 20th of May a strong gale had dismasted the *Vanguard*, and she was towed to a port on the coast of Sardinia for repairs. By the 27th the repairs were completed; but during the storm the frigates had

become separated from the main squadron, and precious days were lost in waiting for them.

Meanwhile urgent instructions had reached Lord St. Vincent from the home government to send a strong detachment into the Mediterranean under Nelson for the purpose of defeating the French expedition. At once the commander-in-chief despatched a reënforcement of ten ships, and at the same time wrote to Nelson: "You, and you only, can command the important service in contemplation."

On the 7th of June Nelson started on his famous pursuit of Bonaparte, hampered by the absence of his lookout ships, but filled with the unswerving determination to find and fight the French fleet. "You may be assured I will fight them the moment I can reach, be they at anchor or under sail," he writes to St. Vincent.

The French had a long start, and all that Nelson knew of them was that they had sailed southward between Italy and Corsica, and were seen by a passing vessel off the north end of Sicily steering to the eastward. The British fleet sailed in their track, picking up news on the way from passing cruisers. It was a long and tedious search. Baffled at every point by want of frigates, Nelson lost weeks in harrowing uncertainty and suspense before he discovered the enemy.

On the 15th of June he learned from a Tunisian cruiser that the French had been seen off Trapani

in Sicily; on the 26th news came to him off Cape Passaro that, having possessed themselves of Malta, the whole fleet of sixteen sail of the line, frigates, bomb-vessels, and three hundred transports had left, still sailing eastward. Nelson was now convinced that it was the intention of Bonaparte to take possession of some port in Egypt, establish himself at the head of the Red Sea, and carry a formidable army into Hindustan. If this surmise were correct, British interests in India were in imminent danger.

Nelson at this point had nothing to go by except his own rapid judgment and the scant information he had been able to collect. When the French fleet left Malta, the wind was blowing strong from one point north of due west. The enemy could not, then, have sailed for the Barbary coast or Spain. The immense armament, including "forty thousand troops in two hundred and eighty transports, many hundred pieces of artillery, wagons, draught-horses, cavalry, artificers, naturalists, astronomers, mathematicians, etc.," as Nelson enumerates them in a letter to St. Vincent, could not have been destined for the easy reduction of Malta. It was some far vaster scheme that was afloat. Where had they gone? And here Nelson again regrets with deep feeling his want of frigates and adds, "If one-half the frigates your Lordship had ordered under my command had been with me, I could not have wanted information of the

French fleet." Two months later he writes: "Was I to die this moment, 'Want of frigates' would be found stamped on my heart."

At this juncture Nelson signalled his most trusted captains to come on board the *Vanguard*, and after consultation with them decided to head for Alexandria. "To do nothing, I felt was disgraceful," he writes, and this, indeed, was his constant feeling; "therefore I made use of my understanding, and by it I ought to stand or fall." Under crowded sail the British fleet pressed on toward Alexandria.

The next few days were a time of cruel suspense and agitation, the culmination of the long, anxious, and perplexing search. The British fleet sighted Alexandria on the 20th, and not a French sail was to be seen, nor could any information be gathered of their whereabouts. Nelson's disappointment and mortification were keen. The long strain had ended in failure. His judgment had apparently gone astray. Little did he then dream that, starting as he did so far behind the French, he had outstripped them by several days, and that his unerring reasoning powers had led him to the appointed destination before Bonaparte had arrived. The French fleet had veered to the south shore of Candia, and under cover of the night and a dense fog the two hostile armaments had been within sight of each other but hidden from view. Not knowing this, Nelson, impatient of delay, stretched

his fleet over the coast of Asia, then, under press of sail night and day, steered along the northern shore of the Mediterranean, and, passing by Candia, returned to Syracuse.

On the 20th of July he writes to Sir William Hamilton: "I cannot find, or to this moment learn, beyond vague conjecture, where the French fleet are gone. Having gone a round of six hundred leagues with an expedition incredible, here I am as ignorant of the situation of the enemy as I was twenty-seven days ago."

But this want of success, and his extreme vexation and nervous anxiety, did not deter Nelson from beginning the search again. On the 23d of July the fleet had watered and revictualled, and lay unmoored in the harbor of Syracuse, waiting for a favorable wind. Again Nelson sailed eastward and southward, convinced that Egypt was the goal of the French. "Neither our former disappointment," writes Captain Berry in his account of the chase, "nor the hardships we had endured from the heat of the climate, though we were still to follow an uncertain pursuit, could deter the admiral from steering to that point where there was a chance of finding the enemy."

Six days after leaving Syracuse the British fleet under crowded sail sighted the Pharos of Alexandria, and there in Aboukir Bay, fifteen miles from the port, rode the French fleet in solid battle array.

The meeting did not find Nelson unprepared. During the whole of the long cruise it had been his custom to summon the captains of the ships on board the *Vanguard*, and to discuss every possible situation of the enemy. In these conferences he would lay before them his plans of attack under every imaginable condition, whether they should meet the French by day or by night, in open sea or at anchor. In this way he had familiarized his captains with his different ideas and plans, so that when the moment presented itself there would be no time lost in conferences or manœuvres. Each one knew beforehand the intentions of his chief. The happy result of this method was at once seen at Aboukir.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the French fleet was first sighted by Captain Hood of the *Zealous*, who signalled the number of ships to Nelson. The distance between the two fleets was too great for anything but immediate action. In any event the British could not reach their opponents until almost nightfall. There was no time for a council of war, but "the admiral's designs were as fully known to his whole squadron as was his determination to conquer, or perish in the attempt," writes Captain Berry.

Two of the ships, the *Alexander* and the *Swiftsure*, had been sent on the previous evening to reconnoitre Alexandria, and the *Culloden*, having captured a French brig, was seven miles astern

towing in the prize. Signals were made in quick succession from the admiral's ship to prepare for battle, and for the *Culloden* to quit her prize; and at 4:54 that it was the admiral's intention to attack the van and centre of the enemy. At 5:40 Nelson made the signal to form the line of battle ahead and astern of the admiral.

In his official report of the battle to St. Vincent, written on the 3d of August, Nelson announces the victory in a few lines, beginning, "Almighty God has blessed his Majesty's arms in the late battle by a great victory over the fleet of the enemy." It is from the extended accounts by Captain Berry of the *Vanguard* and Captain Miller of the *Theseus* that we know the details of this wonderful battle fought in the inky darkness of the night, in waters and among islands and headlands entirely unknown to every officer in the British fleet.

When the enemy were discovered, they were nine or ten miles to the southward, with Aboukir promontory and island and a network of dangerous shoals and reefs between. The French fleet was moored in a strong and compact line of battle, flanked by gunboats and frigates, and with a battery of guns and mortars on an island in their van. Nelson's quick and penetrating eye at once saw the weak point in the enemy's position; he saw that where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing, there was room for a British ship to anchor.

By taking up positions inside as well as outside of the French line, he could concentrate his fire on the van and centre of the enemy, while the wind would prevent the rear of the French from coming to the assistance of their consorts.

Swinging around Aboukir point and giving the shoals a safe berth, the British line advanced upon the enemy in a single column. The *Goliath* and *Zealous* led the way. Next came the *Orion*, the *Audacious*, and the *Theseus;* the *Vanguard*, Nelson's flag-ship, following sixth in the line. At half-past six, a few minutes before sunset, the action began, and at 6:40 the admiral made the signal to engage the enemy close.

The British ships advanced with silent guns, the men aloft and on deck were furling sails, hauling braces, and making ready to cast anchor. As they swung in to take their positions the whole fire of the French broadsides was turned into their bows. But with gallant and masterly daring the *Goliath* and *Zealous* turned the enemy's flank under a raking fire, and passed inside their line. Next followed the *Orion*, *Theseus*, and *Audacious*, on the inshore side, while the *Vanguard* and four other ships engaged the van and centre on the outside.

The French, finding themselves between two fires, made a firm resistance. The action at once became general and vigorous. The *Theseus* closed suddenly with the *Guerrier*, her rigging within

six feet of the enemy's jib-boom, and opened a deadly fire, every gun being loaded with two or three round shot. In the drawing of a breath the main and mizzen masts of the *Guerrier* fell, her foremast having gone before. In twenty minutes the *Conquérant* and the *Spartiate* were also dismasted.

Then total darkness fell on both fleets. Only the flash and glare of the cannon illumined the night, and the four horizontal lights on the mizzen peak of every British ship shone like stars among the rigging.

The British force engaged had until now counted twelve ships of seventy-four guns, and the *Leander* of fifty, against sixteen ships of the French, some of which carried as many as eighty and one hundred and twenty guns. The *Culloden*, after the signal from the admiral's ship to quit her prize, had made all sail to reach the scene of action. Her gallant captain, Troubridge, Nelson's trusted friend and adviser, from his over-anxiety and zeal to join the fleet, ran too close to the dangerous rocks, which his chief had cleared with such happy caution, and his ship grounded on the tail of the shoal. Filled with anguish and bitter disappointment, Troubridge exerted every effort to get her off. For hours, all through the night, he and the ship's company worked with anxious zeal; but the ship stuck fast, and lay beating against the rocks almost within gunshot of the hostile fleets. Trou-

bridge's only consolation, though a slight one, was that he served as a beacon and a warning to the *Alexander* and the *Swiftsure*, which were hastening under crowded sail from the harbor of Alexandria to Aboukir Bay. Saved by his signals from a similar fate, the two seventy-fours rounded the reef and swept into action at about eight o'clock. Soon after this reserve force had entered the scene, two other French ships, the *Aquilon* and the *Peuple Souverain*, were dismasted and silenced and fell into the hands of the British.

Captain Miller of the *Theseus* writes to his wife: "Having now brought all our ships into battle, you are to suppose it raging in all magnificent, awful, and horrific grandeur." We can, in fact, well picture to ourselves the superb and awful power of the scene: the black sea, and blacker sky; the clouds of dense smoke; the sudden flashings from the cannons' mouth which lit the sky with crimson fire and spread a deep, lurid glow over the thick smoke; the shattered rigging and the riddled hulls; the fearful crash on crash of the deadly broadsides; the creaking, shivering, crushing sound of rended wood, and the heavy fall of masts.

Five ships of the French van had surrendered, but in the centre of the line still rode the formidable flag-ship of Admiral Brueys, the *Orient*, a 120-gun ship, the *Tonnant* of eighty guns, and the *Heureux*. Even these were now completely in

the power of the British, and could scarcely fail to be taken. Victory was assured.

But in the very face of success, Nelson lay in the cockpit, severely wounded in the head. In the heat of the attack, at about half-past eight, a missile struck his forehead, blinding him completely for the moment. As he fell into Captain Berry's arms he exclaimed, "I am killed; remember me to my wife!" He was carried below at once, and the surgeon came forward to attend to him, but he insisted on waiting until his turn came, although the pain was intense. After his wound was dressed, while he was still suffering and blinded, he groped for pen and paper and scrawled the first words of his despatch to St. Vincent, announcing the victory.

While Nelson lay below, word was brought to him that the ship *Orient* was on fire. He at once ordered himself to be carried on deck, and from there witnessed the most dramatic and fearful scene of the night. At about nine o'clock the poop of the French flag-ship caught fire. The *Swiftsure* and the *Alexander* turned the full force of their batteries into the burning ship, the flames spread rapidly, and before long the whole after part was in a blaze.

By the light of the vast conflagration, towering high toward the heavens, every ship loomed out in huge, lurid shapes, every mast and spar and rope was outlined against the fiery sky, and even the

colors could be seen flying at the mastheads and proclaiming the hostile countries.

While their ship was wrapped in flames, the heroic Frenchmen on the lower decks still worked at their guns, and the cannonading to leeward still kept up. At ten o'clock a fearful explosion rent the air; then a pause, and the silence of death. The eyes of all were fixed on the mighty wreck, and on the flaming masts and yards, carried like rockets high into the black sky, and then falling still aflame into the water and on the surrounding ships.

The awful, breathless stillness was broken. Then all became feverish activity, fire-buckets and engines were brought out to save the threatened ships. Fire had started on the *Alexander*, but soon the flames were extinguished. Nelson, full of concern for the lives of the poor Frenchmen, ordered out from the *Vanguard* the only boat that could swim, and his example was immediately followed by the captains of the other ships. Many of the unfortunate crew of the *Orient* were thus saved.

On this scene of devastation the moon rose and spread her pale, cold light over the turmoil and confusion of the battle.

Firing had recommenced and was kept up until three o'clock in the morning, with only ten minutes' total cessation. Victory having been secured in the van and the centre, a number of British ships

moved on to concentrate their fire on the French rear. By this time the men were tired and exhausted, and, writes Captain Miller of the *Theseus*, "As soon as they had hove our sheet anchor up, they dropped under the capstan-bars, and were asleep in a moment in every sort of posture, having been then working at their fullest exertion or fighting for near twelve hours."

Efforts gradually became more fitful and unsystematic. Worn out with exertion and fatigue, deprived of their tireless and unparalleled leader to guide and personally direct them, the captains failed to make a last united attack which would not have allowed a single ship to escape. The *Généreux* and *Guillaume Tell*, with two frigates, cut their cables and stood out to sea. The *Zealous* started in pursuit, but she had suffered much in her rigging and there was little hope of her reaching the Frenchmen. As no other ship could support her, she was recalled by the admiral.

Notwithstanding his magnificent victory, Nelson was dissatisfied that a single ship should have escaped him, and not until many months later, when he succeeded in capturing in the Mediterranean the very ships that had eluded him at the Nile, did he feel that he had completely carried out St. Vincent's instructions to "take, sink, burn, or destroy" the armament of France.

The whole of the 2d of August was taken up with securing the French ships that had struck

and in attending to the wounded. In the morning Nelson had issued the following memorandum to the captains of the fleet : —

"'Vanguard,' off the Mouth of the Nile,
"2d August, 1798.

"Almighty God having blessed His Majesty's arms with victory, the Admiral intends returning Public Thanksgiving for the same at two o'clock this day; and he recommends every ship doing the same as soon as convenient.

"Horatio Nelson."

On that and the two following nights the Arabs and the Mamelukes, who had been spectators of the battle and had lined the shores of the bay all through that memorable night, illuminated the whole length of the coast and the country, as far as eye could see, in celebration of the victory.

The inspiring news did not reach Great Britain until two months after the victory. When the nation realized the full extent of this decisive success, exultation filled the land, and popular enthusiasm rose to the highest pitch of excitement. Nelson was raised to the dignity of a baron with the title of Baron Nelson of the Nile — a reward far from equal to the greatness of his achievement, since it was the lowest rank in the peerage. Greater pleasure was given him by the many tokens and congratulations which he received from every part of the globe. The Parliament of Great

Britain voted him $10,000 yearly, the East India Company presented him with $50,000, the city of London sent him the gift of a sword. The city of Palermo, the island of Zante, the captains who served under him, all offered him tributes of their admiration. The Emperor of Russia, the King of Sardinia, the King of the Sicilies, the Sultan, sent him rich presents — a diamond aigrette, boxes set with diamonds, and a sword richly ornamented with diamonds.

Meanwhile Nelson was gathering up the fruits of his great victory. Anchored between Alexandria and Rosetta to prevent all communication along the coast, he felt the importance of holding this position as long as possible. "The French army is in a scrape," he writes on the 11th of August; "they are up the Nile without supplies." In a week's time six of the prizes were in a condition to sail and were sent with seven ships, under Sir James Saumarez, to Gibraltar.

The task of refitting the squadron Nelson felt to be almost beyond his power. The pain and suffering from his wound in the head continued to make him dazed and bewildered, and he was doubtful whether he would be able to stay in the Mediterranean. But on the 15th of August he received secret orders from the commander-in-chief to return from Alexandria, as further important operations were being planned. Leaving Captain Hood with three line-of-battle ships and three frig-

ates to blockade Alexandria, intercept French supplies, and prevent communications, Nelson ordered the three remaining prizes to be burned, and hastened his departure. Sailing westward about the 19th of August, he anchored at Naples on the 22d of September to repair and refit his disabled and "rotten" ships.

At Naples he was received with the wildest demonstrations of joy. Flattery and adulation were heaped upon him. He had arrived worn out with excitement and anxiety, weakened and irritated by his wound and the fever which set in after it.

New traits of character now develop. Nelson, who, until the battle of the Nile, had always been sanguine, hopeful, generous, buoyant, genial, enthusiatic, thoughtful for others, who had idealized life and events and men, becomes after his wound in the head somewhat complaining, peevish, and irritable, more ready to criticise others, more despondent about his own condition. His love of praise and admiration, from being a weakness, grows to be a fault. His strength of moral purpose and noble grandeur of character suffer a loss, while his guiding intellect, his renown, his glory, the lustre of his achievements, and his heroic patriotism continue untarnished to the end.

A stay of several months at the Neapolitan court; the flight of the king and queen of Naples in the *Vanguard*, under Nelson's protection, to

Palermo; a residence in the Sicilies; the blockade of the Bay of Naples by Captain Troubridge, and the evacuation of the city and neighboring islands by the French, were the events of the winter of 1798–1799.

Early in May word was brought to Nelson at Palermo that a French fleet of nineteen sail of the line had slipped out of Brest and joined the Spanish fleet of twenty-seven ships of the line at Cadiz. Nelson at once was all energy and activity. The definite emergency roused him from his depression and discontent. Sending for Troubridge in the Bay of Naples, and for Captain Ball off Malta, he collected with all possible haste a squadron of ten or more sail of the line, and cruised in the Mediterranean in the hope of getting news of the enemy. But the French had succeeded in eluding him. After a fruitless search Nelson returned again to Palermo.

Early in 1800 he was cheered by the capture, after a hot action, of the *Généreux* and *Guillaume Tell*, the two line-of-battle ships that had escaped him at the Nile. "My task is done, my health is finished, and probably my retreat forever fixed," he writes, after the surrender of the *Guillaume Tell*.

The long blockade and siege of Malta to which he had been detached by Lord Keith, the successor of St. Vincent as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet, completed the undermining

of his health. His state of extreme exhaustion increased day by day, and he was at last permitted by the admiralty to return to England. Striking his flag in the Mediterranean, he made the journey by land, crossing the Continent and arriving at Yarmouth on the 6th of November. He at once reported his health to be entirely restored, and expressed his desire to serve immediately, as it was not his wish "to be a moment out of active service."

CHAPTER XXV

"ENGLAND MISTRESS OF THE SEAS"

EARLY in 1801 Nelson hoisted his flag as vice-admiral of the Blue on the *St. George*, and received orders to place himself under Sir Hyde Parker, who had been appointed to the North Sea command. On the 12th of March a fleet of sixteen ships of the line, with a number of frigates, sloops of war, bombs, and smaller craft, making a total of fifty-three sail, put to sea from Yarmouth Roads and headed for the Baltic.

The expedition upon which Great Britain was about to embark was an attempt to settle by arms her misunderstandings with Denmark over the right of belligerents to search neutral ships for contrabands of war. Great Britain maintained her right; Denmark resisted it. Russia had joined her claims to those of Denmark, emphasizing her hostile attitude by the seizure in Russian ports of three hundred British merchant vessels, and the two Baltic countries combined with Sweden and Prussia to form an armed neutrality. While no formal declaration of war had been issued, Great Britain despatched her fleet to maintain her rights in northern waters.

Nelson was impatient of every delay. "Time is everything," he once said, "five minutes make the difference between victory and defeat." His plan would have been to sail with all possible speed for the mouth of Copenhagen harbor, and bring the Northern Coalition to decisive terms, either for peace or immediate war. Every hour gave the Danes time to make preparations for defence.

On the 19th of May the British fleet reached the Skaw, the northernmost point of Denmark. More delays and vacillations on the part of the commander-in-chief exasperated Nelson, whose principle was to "strike quick, and home." Missing a fair wind which would have carried them through the Kattegat, and another fair wind which would have taken them through the Sound, the fleet finally made a false start up the Great Belt, only to return to its former anchorage.

At last, at daylight, on the morning of the 30th, with a top-sail breeze blowing from the northwest, the signal was made to sail in order of battle through the Sound. Nelson had shifted his flag from the *St. George* to the *Elephant* as being a lighter and faster ship. His plan of operations, which he laid before Sir Parker, showed his masterly comprehension of the situation, his energetic, bold, and impetuous spirit, and was in the main accepted as the working plan of attack.

Copenhagen was the goal of the operations. Led by Nelson in the van, the fleet passed through the Sound unmolested by the Swedish batteries. The Danes opened fire from one hundred pieces of cannon and mortars, but the shower of shot fell a cable's length from the British ships and did no harm. The whole fleet anchored five miles below Copenhagen. Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson, accompanied by several senior captains, at once reconnoitred the harbor and channels in a schooner.

The enemy had taken advantage of the British delays to strengthen their defences, and had made formidable preparations for resistance. Their line of defence covered four miles from end to end; a floating battery, extending along the coast for almost two miles, was made up of the hulls of seven line-of-battle ships, unrigged and filled with ordnance, ten pontoons, a bomb-ship, and many smaller craft. Several shore batteries and the Trekroner, or Three-crown Battery, an artificial island on piles, flanked the flotilla at each end, and off the harbor's mouth, which was also protected by shore batteries, were moored several battle-ships and lighter craft.

Two days were spent by the commander-in-chief, Nelson, and all the artillery officers in the examination of the inner and outer channels by which Copenhagen could be approached, and of the Middle Ground between them, or the great shoal. The difficulties of navigation among these dangerous

flats would have seemed almost insuperable to any one but a Nelson. Even the experienced pilots and masters, who were familiar with every inch of the ground, dwelt incessantly on the dangers of attempting an entrance. To all suggestions of alarm or hesitation Nelson returned an impatient and irritated answer. It was he who, during the night, went in a boat to oversee the laying down of fresh buoys, the Danes having removed or displaced the former ones.

At a council of war, called by Admiral Parker on the 31st of March, Nelson laid down his plan of attack; he proposed to enter through the outer channel and to attack the back or weakest end of the enemy's position. He offered his services, and asked for ten line-of-battle ships and all the smaller craft. Admiral Parker, with great discretion, appointed him to this detached service, and left everything to his decision, giving him two more line-of-battle ships than he had asked for.

"During this council of war," writes Colonel Stewart, who gives us the chief detailed account of the battle, "the energy of Lord Nelson's character was remarked." Pacing the cabin with resolute and energetic step, and working the stump of his arm, as he always did under excitement, he showed mortification and annoyance at any suggestion of irresolution or fear.

On the 1st of April the whole fleet took up a position two leagues from the city, and from there,

at about one o'clock, Nelson threw out the signal for his division to weigh. Under a light breeze the ships passed one by one through the northern channel, led by the light *Amazon*, and as twilight fell they reached their anchorage off Dragör Point, not two miles from the enemy's line. As the ships lay in the crowded anchoring ground, thirty-three sail huddled close together, and within range of the Danish mortar-boats and battery, a shower of shells would have done fearful havoc. But the Danes were too busy in strengthening their line, and were too confident in the impassability of their dangerous channels, to pay any attention to the enemy's ships. All through the dark night the British guard-boats slipped stealthily and silently over the water, even to the very side of the leading Danish ship, Captain Hardy sounding as he went, and getting the bearings of the shoals.

On the night of the 1st of April, on the eve of the battle, "the gallant Nelson," in high spirits and animated with excitement, sat at table with a choice party of his friends and comrades in arms. All were anxious for the dawn, and full of admiration for their great leader. Early in the evening the signal to prepare for battle had been made, and the night was spent in drawing up instructions for the captains. Nelson was so exhausted while dictating his orders that his friends begged him to lie on a cot on deck. From there he still continued to dictate, and to urge his men to work.

As the morning of the 2d of April broke with a fair wind and clear sky, the pilots and masters were called on board the admiral's ship. Hesitation and uncertainty made them loath to lead the fleet. But not a moment could be lost; the signal was made for action, and Nelson urged them to be resolute and steady. At last Mr. Brierly offered to lead the column, and at half-past nine the ships weighed anchor in succession. Led by the *Edgar*, the noble line of battle-ships advanced upon the enemy. Two of them kept too close to the shoal and ran aground; the rest of the line took up their positions a cable's length from their opponents.

At about ten o'clock the action began, and in little more than an hour's time the battle became general. The British line was spread from end to end of the Danish position; but the Crown Battery, which was to have been attacked by the grounded ships, was left without opponents until Captain Riou of the *Amazon* led his squadron of frigates to replace the missing battle-ships. Hour after hour the raking fire kept up along the whole length of the line, while the division under Admiral Parker threatened the mouth of the harbor from the outside. Impeded by the currents, the British gun-brigs could not come into action, and only two of the bomb-vessels reached their positions. By one o'clock the *Monarch* and *Isis* had received serious injury, and the *Bellona* and *Russell* were flying

signals of distress. From the *Agamemnon* came the signal of inability. Nelson's flag-ship, the *Elephant*, was still warmly engaged with the Danish commodore in the *Dannebrog*, and with two heavy praams.

At this moment was made on the *London*, Admiral Parker's flag-ship, the famous signal of recall. Watching the conflict from afar, the commander-in-chief saw the stubborn resistance of the Danes, saw also the mishaps to some of the British vessels which had reduced their fighting numbers to only nine line-of-battle ships. Uncertain by nature, and lacking that greatness of mind and soul which takes high risks, he feared a crushing defeat, and signalled for the action to cease.

Lord Nelson was walking the quarter-deck, as he had been throughout the action, animated and full of heroic purpose. The signal lieutenant advanced toward him and reported that signal No. 39 (to discontinue the engagement) was thrown out on board the *London*. Nelson paid no heed, but continued his walk. At the next turn the lieutenant asked, "whether he should repeat it?" Nelson replied, "No, acknowledge it," and then added, "Is No. 16 (for close action) still hoisted?" The lieutenant answered that it was; then Nelson said, "Mind you keep it so."

Walking the deck with agitation and working the stump of his right arm, he exclaimed to Colonel Stewart, "Do you know what's shown on

board the commander-in-chief? No. 39." On being asked what that meant, he replied, "Why, to leave off action." — "Leave off action!" he repeated, and we can fancy what mingled contempt and determination were in his voice, "Now damn me if I do." Then he turned to Captain Foley and said playfully, "You know, Foley, I have only one eye. I have a right to be blind sometimes," and raising the glass to his blind eye he said, "I really do not see the signal."

The signal was therefore not repeated by Nelson as a command to his division. Admiral Graves repeated it, but left the signal for close action still flying. Not a ship of the line moved from its place in the battle, and what would have been an annihilating defeat was turned by this determined attitude into a glorious victory.

The action continued with undiminished intensity. By two o'clock the larger part of the Danish line had been silenced. The *Dannebrog* was disabled and on fire, and Commodore Fischer had twice been obliged to shift his flag. Many ships were adrift, others were completely shattered and had struck. The Danish line of defence was destroyed, and the Crown Batteries could no longer be held. The victory was complete.

At half-past two Nelson sent a flag of truce on shore, with a letter to the Crown Prince, insisting on a cessation of firing from the ships that had struck, else he would be forced to burn the prizes.

He had been led to take this step by the irregular proceedings of the Danes, who either were ignorant of the usages of war or chose to disregard them, and continued to fire upon the British boats as they approached to take possession of the prizes, even though they had struck their colors as a sign of surrender.

The truce was accepted and prolonged several days. Nelson was able to remove, not only the prizes he had captured, but also his own ships from the intricate channels, and to land all the wounded Danes on shore. The entire British fleet then passed through the difficult passage of the Grounds, before looked upon as impracticable, and entered the Baltic. Nelson remained in the Baltic for two months as commander-in-chief of the fleet, Sir Hyde Parker having been removed, and on the 19th of June returned to England, where he landed on the 1st of July at Yarmouth.

Nelson's health had greatly suffered during the northern campaign, and on his return to England he longed passionately for rest. But England was alarmed by rumors of a French invasion, and the country could not be quieted unless a Nelson protected her shores. He was appointed commander-in-chief of a squadron of defence, whose mission was to cruise off the coast and protect the Thames and Medway. In little more than a month he hoisted his flag and kept it flying until the following April, nine months of irritating, uncongenial,

wearying command, which left him sore in body and mind. The hero of St. Vincent, of the Nile, and of Copenhagen was not made for patrol work and boat warfare. His release came at last, and he was given a short period of that rest he so much desired. Cessation of hostilities with the French republic was announced in October, 1801, but the peace of Amiens was not signed until late in the following March, and on the 10th of April, 1802, Nelson received orders to strike his flag.

After the battle of Copenhagen, Nelson had been raised to the rank of viscount, and in October, 1801, he had taken his seat in the House of Lords. At this time he especially felt, with keen and generous sympathy, the neglect of the government, the admiralty, and the city of London to reward or acknowledge the devoted services of those who had fought at the battle of Copenhagen. No medals had been issued after the victory, no thanks had been voted by the city, no rewards had been granted to any but himself and Admiral Graves. His devoted loyalty to all those who had shared with him the perils of battle, and had helped him to win his glorious victories, was at all times one of the noblest traits of his character. It was this, in large measure, which won for him the enthusiastic support and the warm affection of every man who served under him.

He wrote to the Lord Mayor of London on the 8th of November, 1802: "If Lord Nelson could

forget the services of those who have fought under his command, he would ill deserve to be so supported as he has always been." In writing previously to Lord St. Vincent he had said: "If ever I feel great, it is, my dear Lord, in never having in thought, word, or deed robbed any man of his fair fame." With his thirst for glory, he never desired to win it at the expense or neglect of those who had borne with him the dangers and hardships of war.

Referring to Copenhagen, in a letter to the Lord Mayor, he writes: "I should feel much mortified, when I reflected on the noble support I that day received, at any honor which could separate me from them." In this same letter he refused to receive a vote of thanks from the city of London for his conduct on the Downs, and afterward refused to dine at Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day.

In May, 1803, war with France having broken out afresh, Nelson was appointed commander-in-chief of his Majesty's ships in the Mediterranean. On the 18th he hoisted his flag on board the *Victory*, the ship whose name was to become immortal as the one in which he fought the last battle and won the crowning victory of his life.

Sailing from Spithead on the 20th of May, he joined Sir Richard Bickerton on the 8th of July, and began the blockade of Toulon and of the French fleet which lay within the harbor. Through gales of wind and squalls, the tedious work of

blockading was carried on. The weariness of it may be judged from a letter written by Nelson on the 7th of July, 1804, exactly one year after the blockade had begun: "We have nothing but incessant gales of wind, and I am absolutely worn out." Most of his ships were scarcely seaworthy, and only four of them were "fit to keep the sea."

Meanwhile at Toulon and Brest the French navy was being daily increased and put into effective condition. New ships were equipped, troops gathered for embarkation, every preparation made for a fresh naval expedition.

The invasion of Great Britain was the object of the French emperor's new enterprise. For this stupendous undertaking Napoleon had been drilling an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, and collecting a fleet of thirty-five ships in the harbors of Toulon, Brest, and Rochefort. The squadrons were to assemble at the West Indies and from there sail for the Straits of Dover.

Nelson's sagacity showed him the importance of preventing the junction of the French squadrons, and of fighting them as soon as they left port. For this contingency he had been waiting under trials, hardships, and disappointments for a year and a half — a period of bitter anxiety and deprivation. The long-expected news was flashed to him by signals as his fleet lay at anchor in Magdalena Roads. He had left two lookout frigates to watch the movements of the enemy; under press

of sail they sped to his anchorage. The French fleet, under Admiral Villeneuve, slipped out of Toulon harbor on the 17th of January, bound for Sardinia.

On the afternoon of the 19th Nelson saw the signals; three hours later his fleet was at sea in hot pursuit. The *Victory* in the lead, followed by a single column, each ship carrying a light in her stern, filed through the dangerous channel, only a quarter of a mile wide, between Sardinia and Biche, in the black night, under a heavy gale of wind. Then followed the heart-rending search for Villeneuve. Nelson scoured the Mediterranean in the worst weather he had ever seen; gale after gale swept his ships over the angry waters. The same blasts that tormented Nelson, and added to the perplexities of the pursuit, drove the French back to port and to refit.

Again Villeneuve set sail with eleven line-of-battle ships, seven frigates, and two brigs. Nelson had been battling and drifting with the storm, beaten by wind and waves; he had been to Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia, to Alexandria, Candia, and Malta; he had "covered the channel from Barbary to Toro with frigates and the fleet." Yet the French escaped him.

On the 18th of April he writes: "I am going out of the Mediterranean after the French fleet." That they had eluded his vigilance was a severe affliction, and smarting under the mortification,

yet with a full sense of having done all within his power, he followed them westward. Bad weather dogged him and held him back. "My good fortune seems flown away; I cannot get a fair wind. Dead foul! — dead foul!"

Through the Straits and after them he went. "Salt beef and the French fleet is far preferable to roast beef and champagne without them." Through the Gut, threatened by a Levanter, past Cape St. Vincent, then straight across the Atlantic to the West Indies.

On the 4th of June the British fleet of ten sail of the line sighted Barbadoes. Rumors that the French fleet had been seen in the Caribbean waters continued to reach Nelson. On he sped to Tobago, to Trinidad, to Montserrat, to Antigua. The enemy had been before him, and had slipped through his fingers. Still not despairing, he turned about, and pursuing them across the Atlantic once more he hoped to reach Cadiz before they did. Back to Europe, under press of sail, his course lay. He had covered 6,686 miles of sea, thirty-four leagues per day. On the 18th of July, three months after he had left the Straits of Gibraltar, he writes: "Cape Spartel in sight, but no French fleet; how sorrowful this makes me, but I cannot help myself." The same day he joined the squadron under Vice-admiral Collingwood before Cadiz. On the 20th of July he makes this entry in his diary: "I went on shore for the first time since

June 16th, 1803, and from having my foot out of the *Victory* two years, wanting ten days."

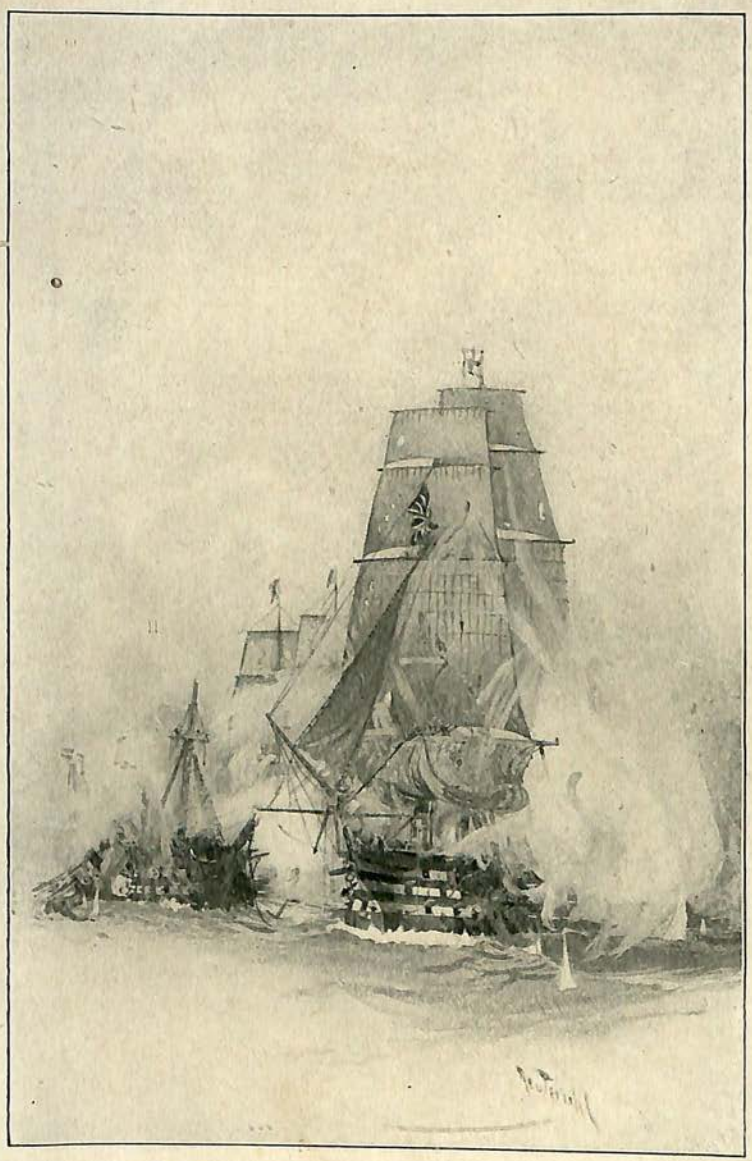
That his long and arduous chase of Villeneuve had ended in what he considered failure, "almost broke his heart," as he himself says, for his one object had been to find the French fleet and destroy it. That he had rendered an almost equal service by saving the West Indies, and returning in time to save Great Britain, he did not at first realize.

On the 25th of July he received the first information of the enemy's fleet. It had been seen steering northward, and to the north Nelson went in pursuit. Three weeks later he joined Vice-admiral Cornwallis off Ushant, and receiving orders to return to England, he sailed for Spithead. His stay at home was short. Two weeks after his arrival he again hoisted his flag on the *Victory* and sailed from Portsmouth on the 15th of September. Fourteen days later he joined Collingwood off Cadiz. The force under his command counted twenty-seven ships of the line. Lying in the outer harbor of Cadiz were thirty-six battle-ships and a number of frigates ready for sea, the combined fleets of France and Spain, under the command of Villeneuve and Gravina.

On the morning of the 19th of October, Nelson was cruising off Cape Trafalgar; it was a clear day with an easterly wind. Suddenly the signal flew up on the lookout ships that the enemy was

coming out of port. On the masthead of the *Victory* was run up the signal for a "general chase southeast," toward the Straits of Gibraltar, to prevent the enemy from entering the Mediterranean. Two days later, at the dawn of Monday, the 21st of October, the whole French and Spanish combined fleet had put to sea and was formed in a curved line of battle, stretching five miles from horn to horn, off the southern coast of Spain. On one side lay Cadiz, on the other Cape Trafalgar, in the far distance the Straits of Gibraltar. Towering high among the thirty-three ships of the line was the monster giant, the *Santissima Trinidad*, of a hundred and thirty guns, the largest ship afloat. Directly astern of her loomed the masts of the *Bucentaure*, the famous flag-ship of the commander-in-chief, Admiral Villeneuve. Behind and before rose the black sides of vast structures bristling with guns, a very forest of ships, awaiting the crash of the British liners.

And where was Nelson? The moment had arrived, sought for through two years and four months of marvellous endurance, tenacity of purpose, and unexampled devotion. Coming on deck of his flag-ship, the *Victory*, dressed in his admiral's coat and covered with a blaze of decorations, he made in quick succession the signals: "Form the order for sailing;" "Prepare for battle;" "Bear up." In two columns of attack the twenty-seven British liners bore down full sail upon the enemy.



Nelson's Great Victory at Trafalgar.

Admiral Collingwood, in his flag-ship, the *Royal Sovereign*, led the column to the south, while the *Victory* led to the north.

Toward eleven o'clock Nelson went below, and on his knees wrote the words of his noble prayer: "May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory. . . . Amen." Directly afterward followed the memorable signal which Nelson sent as a last message to his fleet, "England expects every man will do his duty." Shouts and cheers along the whole line greeted the inspiring words. Then was hoisted the signal for "close action," which soon disappeared in the smoke of battle, but was flying till it was shot away.

The *Royal Sovereign* first broke the enemy's line. The *Victory* then swept down upon the *Bucentaure;* and as Nelson's ship rode majestically within range of the allied guns, the whole artillery of eight ships of the van opened upon her. Sheets of flame leaped from the colossal sides of the *Bucentaure*, the *Redoubtable*, and the *Santissima Trinidad*. For a moment the *Victory* was silent. Then she opened a broadside on the *Bucentaure*, which dismounted twenty guns and killed four hundred men; and, leaving the enemy's flag-ship to the mercy of her followers, she entered on that fatal engagement with the *Redoubtable*, which cost Nelson his life.

As the two ships lay side by side, so close that the muzzles of the *Victory's* guns touched the sides of her opponent, Nelson and Captain Hardy paced the quarter-deck. Not fifty feet above them, the mizzentop of the *Redoubtable* swarmed with sharp-shooters. As the two friends reached the cabin hatch, Nelson suddenly fell forward on the deck, shot through the back. "They have done for me at last," he said to Hardy. "My backbone is shot through." He was carried below to the cock-pit, among the wounded and the dying, where everything was done to relieve his suffering. There for three hours he lay, listening to the incessant strife overhead, while the decisive moments of the fight came and went.

The *Bucentaure* surrendered, and prize after prize fell into the hands of the British. Before Nelson had closed his eyes, while his flag was still flying, seventeen of the allied ships had been captured, and one of the most glorious of sea victories had been won. Even at the moment when the great victor breathed his last, the guns ceased firing, and silence fell upon the fleets. And, dying in the hour of triumph, his last words were, "Thank God, I have done my duty!"

Nelson seems from the first to have felt a premonition of his death. The day before the action he said, at dinner, "To-morrow I will do that which will give you younger gentlemen something to talk and think about for the rest

of your lives; but I shall not live to know about it myself."

He lived to know that in the hour of death he had won the most signal, the most superb victory that could crown a man's life-long devotion to his country. When his flag-ship was disappearing in the smoke of battle, Nelson's last words had been, "I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty;" his last thought breathed before he died was for his country. These two ideas, his duty and his country, had been throughout his life the guiding principles of every action, the spur of every self-sacrifice, the goal of every effort. When the long course of his magnificent victories, which had made his name a terror to the enemies of his country, closed at last at Trafalgar, he could feel that his work had been completed, and that he had left "England mistress of the seas."

Not merely will his name be "ever dear to his country," but to the entire world it will always be an inspiration to exalted heroism and devotion.

ADMIRAL DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT

1801–1870

ADMIRAL DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT

CHAPTER XXVI

AMERICA'S CHIEF NAVAL LEADER

We see in history moments when opportunity stands in waiting for the leader. It is the destiny of a chosen few to thus come into the world hand in hand with their appointed task. Their career is dazzling and concentrated. They escape the routine of life, and receive in their youth the hero's crown. Such was the lot of Nelson.

There are other times when we see the leader waiting for the opportunity. To such a man the fulfilment of his destiny comes in the full maturity of his powers, at the close of a long course of quiet and steady preparation. It is the culmination of his life's work, no less brilliant and triumphant because the wreath is laid on a head gray with years. Such was the lot of America's greatest naval commander, Farragut.

The man of genius knows how to recognize and seize the opportunity, whether it comes early or late. Although Farragut was unconscious of the future honor and glory that awaited him, although

he knew not when his opportunity would come, or whether it would come at all, it did not find him unprepared. Preparedness, resolution, quickness, are as necessary to seize, in the rapid course of events, the occasion that leads to victory, as they are to win the victory itself.

David Glasgow Farragut[1] was born on the 5th of July, 1801, at Campbell's Station, a border town in eastern Tennessee. His father, George Farragut, was a Spaniard of pure descent, who had settled in America when he was twenty-one years old. His mother was a North Carolinian with Scotch blood in her veins. Farragut's life during the earliest years of his childhood was one of excitement and danger. Living in a town that was subject to continual raids by the Indians, one of his first recollections was of an attack by the savages during his father's absence. The house of the Farraguts was somewhat isolated, and when the Indians appeared before it, David's mother, a brave and energetic woman, barred the door, and sent her little ones trembling into the loft of the barn. Meanwhile she guarded the entrance with an axe and kept the Indians at bay until they finally departed.

David's father was a man of daring enterprise, with a strong love of the sea, and he early trained his children to danger and exposure, saying that

[1] See the *Life and Letters* of Admiral Farragut edited by his son, Mr. Loyall Farragut.

"now was the time to conquer their fear." After he had moved to New Orleans, he often took his children in a small canoe, or pirogue, across Lake Pontchartrain, when it was blowing almost a gale. Farragut afterward writes in his Journal, referring to these early days: "When the weather was bad, we usually slept on the beach of one of the numerous islands in the lake, or else on the shore of the mainland, wrapped in the boat sail; and if the weather was cold, we generally half buried ourselves in the dry sand."

After the death of his mother, when he was about eight years old, Farragut was adopted by Commodore David Porter, who was then in command of the New Orleans Naval Station. The commodore's father had been tenderly nursed and cared for, during his last illness, by the Farraguts, and out of gratitude for their kindness, Porter offered to provide for one of the children. Fascinated by the commodore's uniform, little David Farragut was delighted at the thought of going to sea, and willingly followed his new guardian. His seaman's life began soon after, for he had but a short period of schooling before he received his midshipman's warrant, sent to him when he was only nine and a half years old. Thus he made, when a mere child, his formal entry into the United States navy, of which he was to become the chief and greatest leader.

His initiation into active service came when he

was ten years of age, and only a year later his lot carried him into the very heat of struggle, amid the hardships and terrors of actual warfare. Child of fame, it so chanced that the schoolroom of his career was on board the celebrated frigate, *Essex*, whose history was one of the most adventurous and exciting of the War of 1812, and whose name became famous from her bold Pacific cruise, one of America's first naval enterprises after the declaration of war with Great Britain.

Captain Porter, who was in command of the frigate, and who had brought midshipman Farragut with him on board his new ship, conceived the daring plan of a long and roundabout voyage across the north Atlantic, down to the south Atlantic, and into the Pacific Ocean. Great Britain held extensive fishing interests in the great South Sea, and to harass and destroy her commerce was the secret object of the voyage. The attempt was hazardous, for British vessels swarmed along the coasts of North and South America, and to elude their vigilance was both difficult and perilous.

The *Essex* was ready for sea early in July, and the summer months were spent in a short cruise off the coast. Running into the midst of a convoy of British transports bound for Quebec, with a thousand soldiers on board, one of her first exploits was to capture a brig and two hundred Britishers. With wonderful coolness and skill Captain Porter manœuvred his prize out of the convoy, under

cover of the night, and then returned to offer battle to the British escort, the *Minerva*, a 32-gun frigate. The two rival frigates were a good match for each other, but the Briton was prudent and refused to fight, standing in among the convoy.

Next followed a lively pursuit of the *Alert*, sloop of war. A broadside brought down her colors, and she was taken in tow after her officers had been transferred to the *Essex*. The little American frigate was now crowded with prisoners, and a conspiracy was formed among them to capture the *Essex*. On the night before the mutiny was to break out, midshipman Farragut lay awake in his hammock. Suddenly a man stood by his side with a pistol in his hand, and for a minute gazed intently at the boy. Farragut feigned to be asleep and lay motionless until the man passed on. Then he slipped from his hammock and crept noiselessly to the cabin. There he found Captain Porter in his cot and told him what he had seen. The captain sprang to his feet and was on the berth deck in an instant, crying "Fire! fire!" The effect was wonderful. The mutineers became alarmed and confused, and failed to carry out their scheme. Before they had recovered from their stupor, the captain called the boarders to the main hatch and ordered them to secure the conspirators.

The *Essex* was the smartest ship of the squad-

ron. Captain Porter, while considerate and generous to those under him, was strict as a disciplinarian, and his crew had been trained to the highest point of perfection. It was an example of discipline on the part of the commander, and devotion on the part of the crew, which was of the greatest value to Farragut as his first schooling in seamanship.

Late in the summer the *Essex* returned to the United States, and in the fall was ordered to sea again to join the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* on the contemplated cruise to the Pacific. Early in October she got under way and headed for the Cape Verd Islands, which were to be the first meeting place of the squadron. Failing to find her consorts there, and after tracking them from island to island, Captain Porter was free to follow his own course, and, deciding to undertake the voyage alone, he immediately started for the southern waters.

The enterprise on which the little *Essex* was thus embarking was bold and full of danger. The season for doubling Cape Horn had long passed; it was now the dead of winter, and her course lay through a wild and tempestuous region. The ports along the coast were friendly to Great Britain, whose influence had spread throughout the states of South America, and the *Essex* could not hope to revictual or refit in any of the harbors. She must depend upon the resources of her own

stores and the chance of prizes captured in mid-ocean. Undaunted by the perils that lay before him, Captain Porter set out upon his distant cruise in the last days of January, 1813. At first the *Essex* met with nothing more eventful than heavy seas and a few British merchantmen which she captured. But her hour of trial was fast approaching.

As she neared the dangerous waters around the Horn, violent storms burst over her, fierce gales of wind lifted the waves into angry, raging mountains of destructive force. For twenty-one days she lay off the Cape. At one time a big sea stove in the ports from bow to quarter, and the water rushed down the hatchways. The sailors below thought the ship was sinking. "This was the only instance," writes Farragut, "in which I ever saw a regular good seaman paralyzed by fear at the dangers of the sea."

Through suffering and hardships, with scant provisions, in the biting cold of the winter blasts, the little ship kept resolutely on her way. Rounding the Cape, she turned northward and sailed up the coast of Chile. At the island of Mocha the crew had a run on shore, and shot wild hogs and horses to replenish their provisions. Then on to Valparaiso, where the ship entered the harbor and anchored for a few days.

Again she put to sea and cruised along the coast of Chile and Peru. Seizing a Peruvian

guarda costa, and recapturing one of her American prizes, the *Essex* sailed for the distant and lonely Galapagos Islands, a favorite station for British whalers. As she neared the islands, several strange sail hove in sight, and an exciting chase followed. Taking to the boats, Farragut, among the others, pulled for the British whale-ships and overtook them. Three were captured on that first day, and five others were afterward added to their group of prizes.

For three weeks the *Essex* continued among the Galapagos Islands, and the men had many good runs on shore. Farragut speaks of those days as among the happiest of his life. After capturing almost all of the British whalers among the islands, the frigate sailed for the coast of Peru toward the middle of June. Having now as many as nine vessels under him, including the prizes, Captain Porter determined to send the larger part of them to Valparaiso harbor. One of the prizes which had been commissioned as a United States cruiser, the *Essex Junior*, and placed under the command of Captain Downes, was detailed as escort to the convoy. Farragut's maiden service fell to him on this occasion. He was sent as prize-master to the *Barclay*, with a party of seamen under him, and was to manage the ship on her long voyage to Chile. "This was an important event in my life," writes Farragut, "and when it was decided that I was to take the ship to Valparaiso, I felt no little

pride at finding myself in command at twelve years of age."

The captain of the *Barclay*, who was "a violent-tempered old fellow," was furious at being superseded by a mere boy, and at having to be under the orders of a chief officer of twelve years of age. The *Essex Junior* was fast disappearing to the south, and Captain Porter to the north, yet the *Barclay* still lay at anchor. Farragut felt that his day of trial had arrived. He knew that the time had come when he must play the man, so he informed the captain that he desired the main-topsail filled away. The captain replied that he would shoot any man who dared touch a rope without his orders, and went below for his pistols.

Turning to his right-hand man of the crew, Farragut told him with firmness and decision that he wanted "the maintopsail filled." A clear "Ay, ay, sir!" was the prompt reply, and the order was at once obeyed. "From that moment," writes Farragut, "I became master of the vessel, and immediately gave all necessary orders for making sail." We seem to see the resolute little figure standing in his midshipman's uniform on the deck of his maiden charge, and holding to his rights with that vigor and prompt resolution which characterized him throughout his life. This early training in self-reliance and responsibility was of inestimable value to one who, in after years, was to lead his fleets through unprecedented dangers.

Leaving the captured ships in safe anchorage, the *Essex Junior* returned to the Galapagos Islands with important news from South America. Accounts of the havoc done to British commerce by the *Essex* had reached England. The British whale fisheries in the Pacific had been destroyed, American whalers had been released, as many as fifteen prizes had been captured, and terror spread along the coast of South America, and all this had been accomplished by one frigate. To capture this commerce-destroying ship, the British had sent out an expedition, which was daily expected to arrive in the waters of the Pacific. The squadron consisted of the frigate *Phœbe*, Captain Hillyar, and two sloops, the *Cherub* and the *Raccoon*.

On receiving this news Captain Porter at once decided to make ready for the coming struggle, and sailed for the Marquesas Islands, where the *Essex* and the *Essex Junior* lay for six weeks to refit and revictual. Every preparation was made for a sharp contest. The crews were daily drilled in the use of the "great guns," cutlasses, and muskets for every contingency of fire, fighting, or boarding. Everything was done in the way of training and discipline to make ready for a struggle with a greatly superior force, which was destined to be one of the most gallant and heroic actions of the war.

In January, 1814, the *Essex* sailed for the coast of Chile, and anchored in Valparaiso harbor on the 3d of February. Four days later two strange

sails hove in sight. At the time they made their appearance, a third of the American crew were on shore on liberty. This was quickly reported to the strangers, who were none other than the *Phœbe* and the *Cherub*, the long-expected British squadron.

Although Valparaiso was a neutral port, the temptation of an easy capture was too great for Captain Hillyar. His two ships promptly hauled into harbor on a wind, and the *Phœbe* came close alongside and within ten or fifteen feet of the *Essex*. But Captain Porter was prepared. As soon as the enemy had been descried by the look-outs a gun was fired and signal made for "all boats and men to return." In fifteen minutes every man was at his quarters; the powder-boys with slowmatches were ready to discharge the guns, and the boarders, cutlass in hand, stood prepared to board in the smoke.

Finding the *Essex* cleared for action and ready to grapple her enemy, Captain Hillyar changed his mind, backed down, and dropped anchor astern. Had Captain Porter not observed the strict neutrality of the port, the *Phœbe* would have now been raked fore and aft, as she lay completely at his mercy. If he had known how ill his forbearance was to be rewarded, he might have been tempted to annihilate his enemy.

After a few days spent in provisioning and watering, the British vessels went to sea and began a regular blockade of our ships. Week

after week they cruised up and down the waters, outside the mouth of the harbor, and escape seemed impossible. In vain Captain Porter tried to lure or persuade his antagonist into open and single combat. The Englishman was prudent and lacking in good faith, and always manœuvred so as to avoid a fair contest.

Toward the close of March a fierce blast of the Chilean south wind strained the *Essex* away from her anchors and broke one of her cables. Captain Porter thought he might weather the enemy and under crowded sail the gallant little ship stood out to sea. But hardly had she gained the point of the bay when a sudden squall struck her and carried away her maintopmast. Escape was now impossible, and the disabled *Essex* attempted to regain the harbor; but she could only struggle back as far as a small bay, where she anchored a quarter of a mile off shore. Still she was within the neutral limit of Chilean waters, and had every right to expect fair treatment.

At the first sign of flight the British vessels had started in pursuit. They now bore down on their crippled and isolated rival, and opened their broadsides on her. The *Essex* was cleared for action and made every preparation for an heroic defence. But from the first it was evident to all on board that their case was hopeless. "It was equally apparent," adds Farragut, "that all were ready to die at their guns rather than surrender."

With this determination animating every man in the crew, the *Essex* began one of the noblest and most splendidly contested defences on record. It was a fight of three to one, for the combined British ships carried sixty guns, chiefly long eighteen-pounders, and the *Essex* was armed almost entirely with short-range guns. As her opponents kept discreetly at long range, these were entirely useless to her in the battle. Only six of her guns could be brought to bear on the enemy, and those were twelve-pounders, yet so effectually were they used, that in half an hour both of the Britishers were compelled to haul off to repair damages.

Again they returned to the attack, keeping up a galling fire which the *Essex* was powerless to return. Her hull was raked from bow to stern, her cables cut, her rigging shot away, and in this helpless condition she still lay under the fearful and destructive fire. Captain Porter tried to close with the enemy, but the *Phœbe* succeeded in keeping at long range. Then he determined to run his ship ashore and destroy her, but the wind shifted and took her back to sea.

Through this scene of frightful slaughter young Farragut came and went on midshipman's duties. "I performed the duties of captain's aid, quarter-gunner, powder-boy, and, in fact, did everything that was required of me. I generally assisted in working a gun, would run and bring powder from

the boys, and send them back for more." Around him lay the dead and wounded, over his head crashed the destructive shot; but he was ever at his post, and thought of nothing but the working of the guns. And he was not quite thirteen. Never again in his long and brilliant career was he to witness so fearful a struggle or pass through so terrible an ordeal as in this gallant defence of the *Essex*.

Many are the tales of heroic endurance and sacrifice which Farragut relates of his wounded and dying comrades. Among the badly wounded was one of his best friends, Lieutenant Cowell, and of him Farragut writes: "I found that he had lost a leg just above the knee, and the doctor informed me that his life might have been saved if he had consented to the amputation of the limb an hour before; but when it was proposed to drop another patient and attend to him, he replied: 'No, Doctor, none of that, fair play is a jewel. One man's life is as dear as another's; I would not cheat any poor fellow out of his turn.' Thus died one of the best officers and bravest men among us."

Fire had broken out several times in the ship, and the flames finally spread near the powder magazine. The men came rushing up from below, many with their clothes burning. Captain Porter ordered them to jump overboard and swim for their lives, and then finding that the ship was in a sinking condition, he determined to surrender in

order to save the wounded. At half-past six o'clock the colors were hauled down.

After the surrender of the *Essex* Captain Porter and the remainder of the officers and crew were put on parole and allowed to return, in the *Essex Junior*, to the United States, where they arrived on the 7th of July, 1814.

CHAPTER XXVII

ADVENTURES WITH PIRATES

AFTER this heroic initiation into the perils and terrors of war, it seems strange to think of Farragut as going quietly to school again in Chester during the rest of the summer, and until he was exchanged in the following November. Peace with Great Britain, which was soon afterward concluded, brought the war to a close, and ended Farragut's fighting days for many years to come.

Several cruises in the Mediterranean, a winter of study and travel spent in Tunis, one of gayeties in Messina, and more routine cruising in the narrow seas covered a period of five years. In his Journal Farragut shows his keen powers of observation, his strong sense of humor, his exuberance and enjoyment of life, and his ability to extract the most out of every passing phase of his profession and his experiences.

No events of importance or of especial interest took place during these years of routine service, yet to Farragut they were years of valuable training and of broadening education. He visited Gibraltar, Carthagena, Tripoli and Algiers, Italy and Sicily. Wherever he travelled, he took a vivid

interest in the scenes and monuments, in the manners and customs of the people, and he has left in his Journal a graphic and entertaining account of his impressions.

In the spring of 1819 Farragut received an appointment as acting lieutenant on the brig *Shark*. This he considered to be one of the important events of his life, as he was but little over eighteen years of age. More than a year later he returned to the United States, and there passed his examinations.

Two years afterward he embarked on a cruise of active service and exciting adventure. The Mosquito fleet had been fitted out for an expedition against the pirates of the Caribbean Sea, and was placed under the command of Commodore Porter. Farragut immediately asked for orders, and was assigned to the *Greyhound*, one of the small schooners in the squadron. Great pains had been taken by Commodore Porter in the equipment of the squadron, which counted men-of-war schooners, coasting schooners, sloops of war, and large rowing barges. It was expected to sweep the pirates and rovers of the West Indies from off the waters, and drive them from their lurking places along the coast.

The squadron set sail on the 12th of February, 1823. Through a heavy northeasterly gale they made their way in twelve days to the West Indian group. The *Greyhound* and four other schooners

were detailed to go through the Mona Passage, between Hayti and Porto Rico, and to ferret out every creek and inlet on the coast of St. Domingo and Cuba. This was the favorite hunting-ground of the pirates, whose lairs filled the crevices of the island shores.

Two of the barges captured a pirate schooner of sixty tons, with sixty men on board, led by the famous and bloodthirsty Diablito, whose atrocities were renowned throughout the islands. Diablito thought to annihilate the boats as they bore down in fine style on the pirate craft, but his grapeshot did little damage, and when the American crew boarded the schooner, the pirates, with scarcely an effort at self-defence, jumped into the sea. Not many of the fugitives escaped. They were cut to pieces by their pursuers, and Diablito fell, pierced through the head by a bullet.

Another noted pirate, Domingo, a gallant and chivalric fellow, succeeded in making his escape. Two barges had fallen in with his schooner, and gave him an exciting chase for two hours, under a brisk, peppering fire. As they neared the shore, the barges overtook him; but when the American sailors boarded the stern, the pirates jumped over the bows and fled to safety.

The encounters with the sea robbers were not always afloat. Several parties landed and ransacked the shores, pursuing the wily outlaws through marsh and bramble and impassable chap-

arral. Farragut served more than once on these difficult and perilous adventures. After cruising along the south side of Cuba, through the Jardines and around the Isle of Pines, the *Greyhound* dropped anchor off Cape Cruz. At three o'clock in the morning Farragut landed at the head of a party of seventeen marines and boys. Hewing their way with cutlasses through the dense growth of sharp cactus, and scrubby thornbush, struggling over the sharp-edged rocks, and through mire and swamp, in heat so intense that men fainted on the way, they advanced slowly and painfully.

When they finally reached the pirates' lurking place, the robbers had fled; but they found to their surprise several large houses entirely hidden from view, and a dozen boats filled with apparatus for turtling and pirating. They found, besides, a number of caves which might have concealed in safety a thousand men, and which were filled with plunder of all kinds. The Americans burned the houses and carried off the plunder and arms.

Farragut's strong sense of humor comes out in the narration of these adventures. In the midst of privation, hardships, and exposure he saw always the amusing rather than the painful side of every episode. He possessed a fulness of life and enjoyment, a buoyancy, a love of fun, and a strong manliness that carried him through the most trying scenes. He writes in his Journal: "It is to the enjoyment of these trials that I have always felt

myself indebted for whatever professional reputation I have attained."

One of the amusing incidents he relates in connection with the Mosquito war was on the arduous march through the fever-stricken marshes of the Cuban shore. He writes: "When we had advanced about half a mile into the thicket, I ordered a halt, to await the preconcerted signal-gun from the schooner. At this moment I heard a great noise in our rear, and it occurred to me that the pirates might be behind us in force. In forming my men to receive the attack, I made a most animated speech, encouraging them to fight bravely, but had scarcely concluded my harangue when it was discovered that the noise proceeded from about ten thousand land-crabs making their way through the briers."

The cruise was continued through the spring and summer with occasional runs to Key West and Norfolk for revictualling. During the latter part of the time Farragut succeeded in getting the command of a schooner, and carried her through storms and gales, along the Gulf where navigation was difficult and dangerous. This experience was one of great value to him, developing a self-reliance, vigilance, and confidence that served him in after years. "It was an admirable school for a young officer," he writes, "and I realized its benefits all my life. I have never felt afraid to run a ship since, generally finding it a pleasant excitement."

His successor in the command of the *Ferret*, Lieutenant Bell, capsized her at once off the north coast of Cuba, and lost many of his crew.

Yellow fever broke out on the squadron and carried off a large number of officers and men, but Farragut fortunately escaped until the close of his service, when he was taken down with the fever within sight of Washington, on the home run. It was several months before he entirely recovered from the effects of this illness.

In 1825 he was promoted to a lieutenancy. From that time until the beginning of the Civil War his life was uneventful, and was devoted chiefly to routine duty. His first service after his promotion was on the frigate *Brandywine*, one of the fastest-sailing vessels "in the world," which had been chosen to carry General Lafayette back to France. He was afterward ordered to the receiving ship *Alert*, at the Norfolk Navy Yard, where he remained for two years. There he interested himself in establishing a school for the ship's boys, most of whom did not even know their letters.

In October, 1828, he received orders to the sloop of war *Vandalia*, and sailed for the Brazil station, arriving at Buenos Ayres in the heat of a revolution. General Lavalle, who headed the insurgents, held the city, while General Rosas, the afterward famous dictator, was laying siege to it with five hundred guachos of the pampas.

Lavalle was at last forced to give in, and peace was restored. After lying off the city for five months the *Vandalia* returned to Rio de Janeiro, where Farragut, together with the other officers of the ship, paid his respects to the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro I.

The next few years were a succession of periods of distant cruises and of shore duty, all of them equally unimportant, but serving to develop Farragut's quickness of observation, executive ability, and knowledge. He was at all times keenly interested in those under him, and was in return greatly beloved by them. An officer who sailed with him when he was first lieutenant, or executive officer, of the *Natchez*, says: "Never was the crew of a man-of-war better disciplined, or more contented and happy. The moment all hands were called and Farragut took the trumpet, every man under him was alive and eager for duty."

In 1838 Farragut went to sea again as commander of the sloop *Erie*, and was ordered on an interesting cruise to the coast of Mexico. War was at that time in progress between France and Mexico, and Farragut watched with deep interest the bombardment and capture of San Juan de Ulloa, and its gallant defence by the Mexicans.

In September, 1841, he received his commission as commander in the navy, and in 1855 was promoted to the rank of captain, the highest grade in the United States navy before the Civil War.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FIGHT

THE period of Farragut's brilliant and victorious career opened in 1862, when he was already sixty-one years of age, and covered three short but teeming years. Not until the outbreak of the Civil War did the opportunity come for which he had been waiting and preparing himself through fifty-two years of faithful and intelligent service. It came at a time when most men think to retire from scenes of stirring activity and overwhelming responsibility; but it found him ready with unabated vigor and fearless devotion to accept the charge that fortune had brought him and that his country looked to him to fulfil.

Those inland waters which were to be thenceforth inseparably connected with his name and reputation, became from the first the chief seat of the naval operations of the war. The control of the banks of the Mississippi was from the opening of the struggle recognized to be of primary importance to the Northerners. The whole stretch of shore from Memphis to the Gulf of Mexico lay in the hands of the Confederates, who were thus able

to ship large quantities of supplies from the southwest to the seat of war.

The plan that was laid before President Lincoln and a body of experts, and adopted by them, was a naval expedition against New Orleans. A fleet of wooden ships was to run past Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip, the powerful seaward defences of New Orleans, break through the river obstructions, destroy the Confederate fleet, appear suddenly before the Crescent City and capture it. The project was bold and difficult, and would require an officer of resolution and audacity to carry it into successful execution. The choice fell on Farragut.

On the 9th of January, 1862, he was appointed to the command of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron, and, hoisting his flag on the *Hartford*, he put to sea from Hampton Roads early in February. The rendezvous, Ship Island, was reached in eighteen days. Farragut had under his command a fleet of twenty-seven ships, among which were sloops of war and gunboats, and twenty-one mortar-schooners. The fleet carried two hundred guns. An army of fifteen thousand men, under General Butler, was to follow the fleet in transports and hold the captured places.

The Confederate defences, against which Farragut was to operate, were formidable, and had been prepared with great care and skill. The mouth of the Mississippi spreads out into five passes, or channels, made difficult for the passage

of any but light-draught ships on account of the large deposits of mud brought down by the river. At a bend in the river, twenty miles above the passes, two powerful forts, mounting a hundred and fifteen guns and garrisoned by fifteen hundred men, defended the approach from below.

Near the forts two chains were stretched from shore to shore and supported by eight hulks. Above the works were anchored the river flotilla and the Confederate fleet of fifteen vessels, including the ironclad ram *Manassas* and the large floating battery *Louisiana*. Behind the fleet, a hundred miles up the river, lay New Orleans, the goal of the Union expedition.

These were the dangers and difficulties that Farragut was called upon to face successfully. "Success is the only thing listened to in this war," he writes, "and I know that I must sink or swim by that rule;" and later he again writes: "Any man who is prepared for defeat would be half defeated before he commenced. I hope for success; shall do all in my power to secure it, and trust to God for the rest."

It was with this determination to win that he entered upon the great enterprise that had been intrusted to him. "If I die in the attempt, it will only be what every officer has to expect. He who dies in doing his duty to his country, and at peace with God, has played out the drama of life to the best advantage."

The first difficulty encountered by Farragut was in the passing of the bar. Some of the heavier ships ran aground several times, and the *Mississippi* was dragged by tug-boats through a foot of mud. It took two weeks' work to get the *Pensacola* over the bar; the *Brooklyn* was taken in tow, and after eight days' hauling finally cleared the mud-banks. The *Colorado* was not able to pass at all.

On the 7th of April seventeen ships floated in the river and steamed up to within three miles of Fort Jackson. Several days were spent in making a survey of the river for the placing of the mortar-schooners. It was a hazardous service, done in open boats, under the galling fire of the enemy's sharpshooters and the shells from the forts. On the morning of the 18th of April all the schooners were in position, and signal made to open fire.

Concealed in the trees and dense underbrush of the shore, their upper masts and rigging dressed with bushes and branches to hide their movements, the schooners were moored within two miles of Fort Jackson, yet were entirely out of sight. A steady and ceaseless bombardment was kept up for six days. Six thousand shells fell upon the forts. Every minute two shells shot through the air and exploded among the fortifications, breaking the bastions and carrying damage wherever they struck. Meanwhile a detachment steamed up the river, at intervals, and shot out in sight of the forts to divert the enemy's fire from the schooners.

During the night work slackened to give the men some rest. As darkness, and with it quiet, settled down upon the northern fleet, the shapes of the vessels being scarcely visible in the shadows, the whole sky was suddenly lighted as by a conflagration. Mighty tongues of flame came drifting down the river, darting and sweeping from bank to bank, and reaching high into the air in a roaring mass. It was a fire-raft, one hundred and fifty feet long, piled with pine knots, and heading for the fleet of wooden ships. Destruction seemed inevitable. But the ships crowded for the shore, and the raft drifted harmlessly down the middle of the stream. Other fire-rafts followed, the dry wood, smeared with turpentine, flaming dangerously in the high wind; but several boats were sent out to meet them, and the sailors dexterously tackled them and towed the burning mass inshore.

Farragut soon saw that the bombardment of the forts by the mortar-boats, although it was kept up incessantly for six days and nights, could not effectually reduce them or even silence the enemy's guns. He had already determined on the daring and brilliant plan of making a dash past the forts and capturing New Orleans, and he was gradually preparing for the attempt. On the third night of the bombardment he sent out his fleet captain, Henry H. Bell, on a dangerous mission. Placed in command of two gunboats, the

Itasca, Captain Caldwell, and the *Pinola*, Captain Crosby, he was ordered to break through the barrier of schooners and chains which the Confederates had thrown across the river directly below the forts.

The service was one of great temerity, for the gunboats were obliged to do their work within range of the enemy's fire. Captain Caldwell gallantly ran alongside one of the hulks and boarded her. While he was making preparations to fire her, the chains were slipped without his knowledge, and both vessels turned inshore and ran aground under the forts.

In this dangerous position and under a tremendous fire the *Itasca* was obliged to remain until the *Pinola* came to her help. Still undaunted, Captain Caldwell, with marvellous coolness and courage, ran his gunboat up the river through the gap made in the obstructions. After going some distance he turned about, and bore down upon the barrier full speed. The bow caught the chain, lifted it three or four feet out of the water, and severed it. The gunboats then rejoined the fleet.

On the night of the 23d of April, Captain Caldwell again went up the river to see if the gap were still open, and after twice pulling above the obstructions he drifted downstream with the news that the passage was clear. The night of the 24th had been chosen for the attempt. Farragut had already issued his general orders to the fleet, and

had visited every ship to see that they had been carried out. The hulls were smeared with Mississippi mud to make them less visible, the decks were whitewashed so that objects could be seen in the absence of lights, bags of sand and sails protected the machinery, and all the higher spars and unnecessary rigging were sent ashore. Grapnels were put in the boats, force-pumps and engine hose made ready, ladders were thrown over the sides for the carpenters to stop the shot-holes, tubs of water were placed about the decks. Farragut's general order closed with these words: "I wish you to understand that the day is at hand when you will be called upon to meet the enemy in the worst form for our profession. . . . Hot and cold shot will be freely dealt to us, and there must be stout hearts and quick hands to extinguish the one and stop the holes of the other."

The great struggle was at hand. On the night of the 24th of April, soon after midnight, the ships were cleared for action, and at five minutes before two the signal made to weigh anchor. As the moon rose full and clear, at half-past three, the whole fleet was under way. Silently the ships steamed up toward the forts; but already the unusual sounds had been heard by the enemy's lookouts, and the Confederates were ready to receive them. Bonfire after bonfire flashed from the shore, and blazing fire-rafts illumined every inch of the river way. The run could no longer be made in

secret; it must be done under the full fire of the hostile works.

As the ships in single file approached the line of hulks, the mortar-schooners opened a heavy fire of shells upon the forts. The fleet advanced in three divisions, the van led by the little *Cayuga*. Not until the leading vessel was under the forts was she discovered, and then a tremendous fire was opened on her. Lieutenant Perkins, who was piloting the *Cayuga*, writes: "The air was filled with shells and explosives, which almost blinded me as I stood on the forecastle trying to see my way, for I had never been up the river before. I soon saw that the guns of the forts were all aimed for midstream, so I steered close under the walls of Fort St. Philip; and although our masts and rigging got badly shot through, our hull was but little damaged. After passing the last battery and thinking we were clear, I looked back for some of our vessels, and my heart jumped into my mouth when I found I could not see a single one. I thought they all must have been sunk by the forts."

The devoted little Union gunboat, that had braved the first murderous fire of the enemy, seemed for the moment to have been deserted. With wonderful pluck she steamed ahead straight into the eleven gunboats which, in the uncertain glare and flash, seemed to be bearing down upon her, and, Perkins adds, "it seemed as if we were 'gone' sure." Three of the Confederate steamers

attacked her at once and attempted to board her. It seemed impossible that with her two guns she could resist such an onslaught. That she was a doomed ship appeared almost certain.

When one of the Confederate boats was within thirty feet, the *Cayuga* trained her 11-inch gun upon her, and crippled her so that she was obliged to run inshore and was soon on fire. The second enemy hauled off after a shot from the Parrott gun had lodged in her starboard bow. Only one was left, and the boarders were called aft to tackle her, when the Union *Varuna* suddenly sped upon the scene, "rushing upstream like an ocean racer, belching black smoke, firing on each burning vessel as she passed," as a Confederate lieutenant described her dash into the midst of the fight.

Then followed an exciting race and duel. Reckless and impetuous, the *Varuna* steamed rapidly through the Confederate gunboats and went flying up the river alone and unsupported. Behind her, in her tracks, unknown to her and unseen in the lurid darkness, sped the Confederate *Governor Moore* in quick pursuit. To deceive her enemy she hoisted a white light at the masthead and a red light at the peak, the distinguishing lights of the Union vessels. Under a full head of steam she raced headlong up the river, the steamer "shaking all over and fairly dancing through the water." Slowly Lieutenant Kennon gained on his unsuspecting rival and ran her down at last. Hauling

down the Union lights, he opened fire. The duel was furious and deadly. The second shot raked the *Varuna;* she responded with a broadside that killed and wounded many men on the *Moore.*

The Confederate fired recklessly through his own bow in his endeavor to hit the enemy's engine-room, and swiftly rammed his opponent near the starboard quarter, then backed and rammed again. The *Varuna* was sinking, but was still undaunted. She threw three shells into her antagonist, which crippled the *Moore* and set her on fire. Fifteen minutes later the *Varuna* sank, and the *Moore* surrendered to a Union vessel, which had just come up the river.

Meanwhile at the forts and directly above them the scene was one of the greatest confusion and the wildest excitement. One of the Union vessels fired a broadside into a friend instead of an enemy. At the moment the *Varuna* sped past the *Cayuga* at the opening of the struggle, Perkins writes: "Just then some of our gunboats which had passed the forts came up, and then all sorts of things happened. One of our gunboats attacked one of the *Cayuga's* prizes; I shouted out, 'Don't fire into that ship, she has surrendered.' Three of the enemy's ships surrendered to us before any of our vessels appeared."

In passing the forts the larger ships stopped and played their powerful batteries with great effect, receiving a heavy fire in return. The lighter ships

passed swiftly on, sweeping the parapets with grape and shrapnel. The whole of the first division cleared the hulks and the forts successfully.

Then rapidly in its wake came the centre, composed of three large ships — the *Hartford*, Farragut's flag-ship, the *Brooklyn*, and the *Richmond*. The firing of the forts and of the first column had filled the air with dense clouds of smoke, which made the darkness almost impenetrable and greatly hampered the movements of the ships. Scarcely was the *Hartford* abreast of the forts than a fire-raft came down the river, bearing full upon her. To avoid this danger she headed across the river and ran aground under the batteries of Fort St. Philip. In this critical position she remained for some time, receiving all the while the terrible fire of the enemy. "It seemed to be breathing a flame," Farragut said afterward.

As the *Hartford* lay at the mercy of the enemy, plying her batteries on the fort, the fire-raft, guided by a tug, came boldly alongside. In a moment sheets of flame rushed up the masts and wrapped the rigging of the flag-ship, and tongues of fire leaped through the port-holes. The fire department was called and played the hose promptly and with perfect discipline. The whole crew was under complete self-control, but Farragut afterward writes: "It was the most anxious night of my life. I felt as if the fate of my country and my own life and reputation were all on the wheel of fortune."

The fire was quickly extinguished, a shot sank the tug, and the *Hartford* backed clear into deep water. But her head was now downstream, and it was some time before she could be turned around.

Bravely the other vessels continued on their course against the heavy current of the river, meeting with varying adventures and displaying wonderful gallantry. It was a night when men showed the stuff of which heroes are made, when they stood calm and undismayed amid storms of grape, the blaze of musketry, and the fearful explosion of the shells.

Fourteen of the ships passed clear of the obstructions and the forts; only one was lost, and that was the foolhardy *Varuna*. The last three gunboats did not reach the forts until daybreak; and when the batteries opened on them at point-blank range, they were forced to turn back and drifted downstream.

The wonderful feat had been accomplished. Farragut had brought his fleet of thirteen wooden vessels past the obstructions and the formidable batteries of two forts, against a heavy current, and had destroyed the enemy's flotilla. And this had been done with the loss of only thirty-seven men and about a hundred and fifty wounded.

Throughout the 24th the fleet anchored off the Quarantine Station, and on the following morning steamed up the river to English Turn, where the two river batteries, the Chalmette and the McGehee, were quickly silenced.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS

THE Queen City of the Confederacy was the scene of fury, confusion, and dismay. The mob rose in a frenzy, and vented their rage on the streets and wharves of the city. As the fleet advanced slowly toward New Orleans, the river was covered with wreckage. "Cotton-loaded ships on fire came floating down, and working implements of every kind, such as are used in ship-yards. The destruction of property was awful." So writes Farragut in his report of the river fight, and continues: "The levee of New Orleans was one scene of desolation. Ships, steamers, cotton, coal, etc., were all in one common blaze, and our ingenuity was much taxed to avoid the floating conflagration."

The fleet passed up to the city and anchored directly in front of it, and from the summit of the City Hall floated in defiance the State flag of Louisiana. Farragut sent Captain Bailey on the perilous mission of demanding the surrender of the city. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Perkins of the *Cayuga*, who gives an account of their entry: "When we reached the wharf there were no officials to be seen; no one received us,

although the whole city was watching our movements, and the levee was crowded in spite of a heavy rain-storm. . . . As we advanced, the mob followed us in a very excited state. They began to throw things at us, and shout, 'Hang them! hang them!' We both thought we were in a bad fix, but there was nothing for us to do but just to go on."

Mr. George W. Cable, the now well-known author, was then a boy of fourteen, and was in New Orleans at the time of its capture. He has since described the entry of the two Union officers into the hostile city. Hearing the shouts and imprecations of the crowd, he hurried out and ran to the front of the mob, howling with the rest, "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!" He writes: "About every third man had a weapon out. Two officers of the United States navy were walking abreast, unguarded and alone, not looking to the right or left, never frowning, never flinching, while the mob screamed in their ears, shook cocked pistols in their faces, cursed, crowded, and gnashed upon them. So through those gates of death those two men walked to the City Hall to demand the town's surrender. It was one of the bravest deeds I ever saw done."

The mayor declined to haul down the Louisiana flag and hoist the stars and stripes in its stead. The infuriated mob would have killed any one who dared to touch the State flag. After three days of parley, Farragut sent a force of two hundred

and fifty marines with two howitzers, under the command of Fleet-captain Bell. The men were drawn up in front of the City Hall, and the howitzers pointed up and down the street. A dense mob gathered in angry protestation while the Union men hauled down the Louisiana flag and ran up that of the United States.

Thus was consummated the magnificent triumph, the first of Farragut's brilliant successes which followed one another in quick succession and showed him to be the greatest naval commander of his time.

Meanwhile at the lower forts, Jackson and St. Philip, the garrisons had mutinied and the works surrendered to Commander Porter, who had stayed behind with his mortar-boats. Farragut then seized all the steamboats, among them the famous *Tennessee*, and sent them down for the troops of General Butler, who afterward took possession of the city. Several of the Confederate ironclad rams, on which the Southerners had placed so much hope, were destroyed. Farragut writes: "I sent Captain Lee up to seize the principal one, the *Mississippi*, which was to be the terror of these seas, and no doubt would have been to a great extent; but she soon came floating by us all in flames, and passed down the river. . . . We have destroyed, or made the enemy destroy, three of the most formidable rams in the country."

The fall of New Orleans was the knell to Confederate hopes on the *Mississippi*. Panic spread

along the whole length of the river. The two forts at Carrollton, eight miles above New Orleans, were abandoned, the guns spiked, and the Union fleet passed on without opposition.

Farragut was now in favor of carrying his fleet down the Mississippi and leading an immediate attack upon Mobile. The government held to its original intention of sending the fleet up the river to join the Union flotilla, under Flag-officer Davis, which then lay nine hundred miles above the mouth of the Mississippi. In vain Farragut tried to convince the navy department that his fleet was in no condition to be pushed up the river, that his force was inadequate, and that he had no sufficient military backing to aid in the operations. The shores of the river above New Orleans were commanded by high bluffs, which the Confederates had turned into a strong line of defence, and which could be reduced, not by a fleet of ships, but only by a large military force.

In writing home Farragut says: "The government appears to think that we can do anything. . . . Well, I will do my duty to the best of my ability, and let the rest take care of itself. . . . They expect impossibilities." Peremptory orders from the government to "clear the river through" obliged Farragut to advance upon Vicksburg without further delay. "I hope for the best," Farragut said, "and pray God to protect our poor sailors from harm."

He was not especially sanguine as to the result. The enemy's batteries were beyond the reach of the ships. The attack must be made by daylight, as the river at that point was too difficult to navigate by night. The water was beginning to fall, and there were places which had not half the depth drawn by his ships. If he should succeed in going above Vicksburg, he did not expect to get down again before the next spring. These combined reasons made him somewhat despondent as to the success of the undertaking.

On the 28th of June, at two o'clock in the morning, the signal was made to weigh anchor, and the squadron of eleven ships got under way and slowly stemmed the current. The mortar-boats were already in position and opened fire on the forts to assist the advancing line. As the leading ship came within range of the hostile works, battery after battery opened upon her, and "the ridge of bluffs seemed one sheet of flame." The scene soon became one of the most stirring animation. The flag-ship passed at slow speed, firing deliberately and with splendid effect, and pouring her shrapnel into the forts on the heights. Under a raking fire she even stopped once to allow the line to close up. Farragut was watching the fight from his favorite stand, the mizzen rigging, when the captain of the gun on the poop-deck asked him to get down, as he wished to point his gun near that spot. Hardly had Farra-

gut left his post when the whole mizzen rigging was cut away just above his head.

The batteries of the forts were soon silenced, and the men driven from their guns. In two hours the first two divisions of the squadron had passed the forts and the town; but owing to a misunderstanding of orders, the third division failed to advance beyond the works, and dropped down the river. In his official report Farragut remarks caustically: "The department will perceive that the forts can be passed, and we have done it, and can do it again as often as may be required of us." He adds, however, that it would not be easy to do more than silence the batteries for a time, as the enemy had a large force behind the hills, and it would not be possible to take Vicksburg without an army of twelve or fifteen thousand men.

Farragut himself saw very little use in parading up the river past strongholds that could not be captured or held without the support of a large military force, especially as he realized that the control of the river at this point and the positions on land must soon be abandoned, owing to lack of supplies and of troops, and want of a sufficient number of ships to cover the entire line. Patrol work, which was what the operation now amounted to, was not to Farragut's taste.

Having won a brilliant victory at Memphis, Flag-officer Davis was now able to come down the river

with his Mississippi flotilla and join Farragut a few miles above Vicksburg. Thus were carried out the full orders of the government — to clear the river through and make a junction between the upper and lower river commands. As the combined squadrons lay at anchor opposite Vicksburg, news reached them that the Confederate ironclad ram *Arkansas*, which had been built for the destruction of the Union flotilla, was in the Yazoo River. Two ships were at once ordered on a reconnoitring expedition. Hardly had they steamed six miles up the Yazoo than they met the ram rushing down at full speed. Realizing that they were unfit to attempt a struggle with the ironclad, the Union vessels fell back on the fleet, and kept up a running fire down the river.

Warned of the approach of the ram, the Union fleet prepared to receive her; but their fires were low, and there was no time to get up steam. All they could do was to train their guns on the enemy as she passed. Sweeping into the Mississippi, she turned downstream and ran the gauntlet of the entire hostile fleet. But her smokestack was riddled with shot, her colors carried away, and her speed reduced to a mile an hour. As she passed through their midst, the Union vessels showered their missiles, and poured their broadsides into her; but the shot glanced off her iron sides, and only a few shells pierced her armor and exploded within. Still she gallantly and audaciously kept

on her way, aided by the current, and ran for shelter to Vicksburg, where she was moored under the guns of the fort. Although badly injured, she had not been conquered. But about three weeks later, in attempting to reach Baton Rouge, her machinery broke down and she ran aground, where she lay at the mercy of the Union vessels. Seeing that her condition was hopeless, the Confederate commander ordered her to be set on fire, and the crew escaped to the shore.

Meanwhile Farragut had again passed before the Vicksburg forts with his heavy ships, dropped down the river into deeper water, and returned to New Orleans. On the 12th of August, while anchored off the Crescent City, he received his commission as rear-admiral, and was the first officer in the United States navy to hoist his admiral's flag at the main. His promotion was accompanied by a vote of thanks from Congress, and in writing home Farragut says: "It is gratifying to me that my promotion should not have rested simply on my seniority, but that my countrymen were pleased to think that it was fairly merited."

The Union vessels being now greatly in want of repairs and provisions, Farragut steamed down to the Gulf of Mexico and carried his ships into the ample harbor of Pensacola, where they lay through the summer months.

CHAPTER XXX

THE DASH PAST PORT HUDSON AND THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY

WHILE Farragut was at Pensacola, reports arrived that the Confederates were strengthening and fortifying with renewed activity the two important strategic points on the Mississippi which were still in their possession — Vicksburg and Port Hudson, distant two hundred miles from each other. It soon became evident that a well-organized attack must before long be made on these two points. Farragut therefore returned to New Orleans and awaited events. A rise in the river, and a large reënforcement of troops to hold the strongholds captured by the fleet, were the two requirements for a new ascent of the Mississippi. "As Micawber says," writes Farragut, "'I am waiting for something to turn up,' and in the meantime having patience for the water to rise."

Here, as always, the strongest motive with Farragut was his desire to do his duty, and it was a true estimate of his own character when he wrote home: "They shall never say that I backed out; I will do my duty, and obey my instructions. Don't

think that I hold on from ambitious motives. I know too well the history of all revolutions not to know that I now have everything to lose and nothing to gain. My country has rewarded me for my services, and I am ready to do my duty and stay or go as directed."

Firm principle, unshaken loyalty, cool judgment, a calm insight into human affairs — these were marked traits of Farragut's character. Unlike Nelson, his soul was not devoured by ambition; but he had the determination to take circumstances at their flood and to win, if it were possible.

His waiting for "something to turn up" did not last very long. The futile parade up and down the Mississippi, several minor reverses to his blockading squadrons in the Gulf, his inability to be at every threatened point in his extensive command — all these made him restless and discontented. He longed for immediate action and was anxious to begin hostilities at once. Every delay that kept him inactive increased his desire to strike a heavy blow. The long-expected army had at last arrived, under the command of General Banks, but was not ready to move in the great attack. On the 1st of February, Farragut writes: "You will no doubt hear more of 'Why don't Farragut's fleet move up the river?' Tell them, because the army is not ready."

By the end of February the loss of two ships of the up-river squadron determined Farragut to act

immediately. General Banks pronounced himself ready to coöperate by a land attack in the rear of the enemy's batteries, in order to divert their fire from the ships. On the morning of the 14th of March the fleet had steamed up to within seven miles of Port Hudson and anchored off Profit's Island. The enterprise which Farragut had planned on his own responsibility was a difficult one. Port Hudson is situated on a sharp bend of the Mississippi River. A series of high bluffs, strongly fortified with open and masked batteries, protected, along a mile and a half of the east bank, the approach to the town from below, and were a powerful obstruction to an advancing fleet. The strong current which sweeps around the curve of the river forms a deep channel under the bluffs. On the opposite bank are dangerous shoals and baffling eddies, making the navigation extremely difficult and dangerous.

The fleet counted four ships and three gunboats. There were, besides, a number of mortar-schooners, which took a position ahead of the vessels to cover their advance, and were to keep up a rapid fire during the passage of the batteries. In Farragut's plan of attack he ordered each ship, excepting the *Mississippi*, to lash a gunboat to her port side, so that in case of injury or accident she could be towed by her consort to a place of safety.

On the evening of the 14th of March, as night closed upon the Union fleet, a red light stealthily

appeared at the stern of the *Hartford*. It was the signal "For the fleet to form in line and follow the flag-ship." Then came a few anxious moments, while the other ships raised their anchors, and until the answering lights showed that all was ready. The *Hartford* steamed slowly ahead while the *Richmond* and *Monongahela*, with their gunboats, and the *Mississippi* followed their leader through the silent, almost breathless darkness. It was the deathlike tension before the burst of the coming struggle.

Farragut's son, Loyall, who had joined his father at Pensacola, chanced to be on board the flag-ship on this exciting and never-to-be-forgotten night. As he was not in the service, and was by accident on the ship, Fleet-surgeon J. M. Foltz requested that the admiral would permit his son to assist below with the wounded, where he would be in the most protected part of the ship. The admiral's reply was characteristic of the gallant seaman. Having listened patiently, he said: "No, that will not do. It is true our only child is on board by chance, and he is not in the service; but, being here, he will act as one of my aids, to assist in conveying my orders during the battle, and we will trust in Providence and *la fortune de la guerre*." The boy Loyall also declared that he "wanted to be stationed on deck, and see the fight."

In the life of his father Mr. Loyall Farragut

has given a thrilling account of the run past the batteries. "The scene," he says, "was one never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The night was closing in rapidly, and not a breath of air was stirring. An unnatural quiet prevailed on board the ship. The men are standing at the guns, with their sleeves rolled up, eagerly waiting for the work before them." The officers of division moved about the deck, giving orders in a low voice. "The admiral stood on the poop-deck, with his immediate staff around him, moving about occasionally in that quick, active way for which he was so conspicuous; now watching the vessels astern, now looking ahead for the first offensive demonstration from the enemy."

Suddenly from the right bank of the river rocket after rocket darted high into the air, and at the same moment came a sharp discharge from the first battery. As the *Hartford* replied with decision and promptness, new batteries opened upon her, and the flash of their guns was, in the darkness, the only mark our gunners had at which to fire. Steadily the flag-ship kept on her way, sweeping in toward the enemy's works until, at one moment, she was so near the shore that a Confederate officer, who was in command of one of the batteries, said he could, with a ship's pistol, have killed the officers that stood calmly on the poop-deck. He trained on the group one of the guns loaded with grape, but it missed fire.

The roar of the mortars, the shells passing like meteors across the heavens, the guns flashing and blazing until the ship seemed a mass of fire and quivered at every discharge, the fitful glare of the bonfires on the shore, the breathless night with no stir or sound save of the battle, the dense clouds of smoke settling heavily down upon the water and slowly wrapping the ships from sight, — all this made a scene of grandeur and awe.

The pilot, on whose coolness and courage depended the safe passage of the ship, had taken his station in the mizzen top, according to Farragut's directions, so that he might see over the smoke. A trumpet was fixed from the top to the wheel, through which he gave his orders, calling out "Starboard!" or "Port!" with perfect steadiness. As the firing increased and the smoke settled more and more densely over the ship, the pilot called out that he could not see ahead. Instantly the firing was stopped and as the smoke lifted, the sharp bend in the river came into view, and it was seen that the ship was running on shore under one of the enemy's batteries. Her stem just touched the ground, but she was backed clear, and soon steamed ahead out of range of the Confederate guns.

As the *Hartford* with her consort anchored in safety above Port Hudson, Farragut looked anxiously downstream for the rest of his fleet, but no friendly shape loomed out of the darkness and

smoke. In the distance was heard the boom of the cannon, and, far below, the masts and spars of the other ships could be seen "in relief against a fiery sky." Something must have happened. In a low, anxious tone Farragut exclaimed, "What has stopped them?" But no one could answer the question. "Suddenly a brighter light shot up into the sky," writes his son, "and it was soon reported from the masthead that a ship could be seen on fire, and appeared to be the *Mississippi!*"

Meanwhile at the batteries all was confusion and disaster. The remainder of the fleet groped its way blindly in the dense smoke, and lost sight of its leader. The *Richmond* ran the gauntlet of the works; but just as she reached the bend in the river, a plunging shot struck the steam-pipe, and upset both safety-valves. So much steam escaped that the ship could make no headway against the current; she therefore turned back and drifted out of action. The *Monongahela* also reached the turning-point, but ran aground on the shoal and lay at the mercy of the enemy's fire for half an hour. When she at last swung off and again headed upstream, an accidental shot disabled her engine, and she too drifted down the river.

The *Mississippi*, at the end of the line, had reached the last battery when she suddenly grounded at the bend. Every effort was made to back her clear, but it was impossible to get her off the shoal. For thirty-five minutes she was ex-

posed to the galling cross-fire from three batteries, answering in fine style with her own guns. At last the captain decided to abandon and destroy her, so that she should not fall into the hands of the enemy. The crew made their escape in the boats, and the ship was fired in four places. In a short time she was enveloped in flames and drifted down the river, a burning mass. Finally she blew up with a terrific explosion.

Farragut found himself alone upon the river, with one gunboat, between the two Confederate strongholds, Port Hudson and Vicksburg. Slowly and with the greatest vigilance he advanced up the river, making his way among the masses of floating logs, and silencing the scattered batteries on the shore. On the 19th of March, five days after the passage of Port Hudson, he anchored a few miles below Vicksburg, and communicated with Admiral Porter, who was in command of the up-river squadron, and with General Grant who was in command of the army encamped on the Louisiana shore. The ship was provisioned, and General Grant sent down a barge of coal by setting it adrift on the river during the night. The *Hartford* then started to patrol the river between the two fortified points.

Reaching Port Hudson again early in April, Farragut was most anxious to communicate with the remainder of his fleet which had failed to run the batteries and still lay below. It was impos-

sible to send despatches by land, as the enemy was watching every movement, but Mr. Edward C. Gabaudan, Farragut's secretary, offered to take the message by water. It was a perilous service, attended with great risks. Providing himself with a revolver and a paddle, he went alone in a small dugout, skilfully covered with twigs and leaves, and resembling the hundreds of floating logs which were continually drifting down the Mississippi.

During the night he was set adrift on the current of the river and lay in the bottom of the skiff under the branches. Slowly and silently the strange craft floated downstream, under the formidable batteries of Port Hudson and past the town. At one point the swift current swept his bark so close to the shore that he could plainly hear the voices of the sentinels. He dared not move, lest he should attract attention, and hoped not to be seen. But something in the appearance of the craft finally aroused suspicion, and a boat was sent to examine it. As Gabaudan lay motionless in the bottom of his dugout, with his finger on the trigger of his revolver, he listened to the splash of the oars, and the talking of the men, and was determined to make a desperate fight for his life. But the Confederates stopped pulling before they had reached him, and he heard them exclaim, "It is only a log!"

He was safe. Without further adventure he

reached the *Richmond*. Early in the night a solitary rocket darted into the air from below Port Hudson and burst into a thousand fiery stars against the dark sky. It was the signal to Farragut that his daring secretary was in safety and had succeeded in his gallant mission.

The river campaign was drawing rapidly to a close. The blockade of Port Hudson from below and above made the navigation of the Mississippi and the Red River dangerous for the Confederate steamers and barges, and supplies were with difficulty introduced into Vicksburg and Port Hudson. At the close of March General Grant began his march down the west bank of the Mississippi, and Rear-admiral Porter kept pace with him by running past the batteries of Vicksburg. Feeling that he was no longer needed in the upper river, Farragut left the *Hartford* to continue the blockade of Red River, and returned to New Orleans "by one of the dozen winding streams that cut through the country," so that he might look after the interests of the lower blockading squadron.

At this time Farragut writes: "You say you think I am getting too ambitious. You do me great injustice in supposing that I am detained here by ambition." My country has a right to my services as long as she wants them. She has done everything for me, and I must do all for her. God knows there is not a more humble poor creature in the community than myself. . . . I shall

go to church to-morrow, and try to return suitable thanks for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon me."

On the 7th of July Farragut received the news of the fall of Vicksburg, and a few days later of the surrender of Port Hudson. This completed the capture of the most powerful of the Mississippi strongholds, and assured to the Northerners the full control of the vast watercourse, a result to which Farragut rightly felt that he had in large measure contributed. He writes: "My last dash past Port Hudson was the best thing I ever did, except taking New Orleans. It assisted materially in the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson."

Farragut now turned over the entire command of the river fleet above New Orleans to Rear-admiral Porter, and about the 1st of August sailed for New York in the *Hartford*. His ships needed extensive repairs after their long and arduous service, the flag-ship alone showing the ordeal of fire she had passed through by two hundred and forty scars made by shot and shell. For several months Farragut remained at the North, enjoying a well-earned rest at his home, honored and fêted by his enthusiastic countrymen.

The successful opening of the Mississippi now allowed the government to turn its attention to the extensive coast-line of the Gulf. Mobile was, next to New Orleans, the most important of the Confederate ports, and had become more and more necessary

to the Southerners as their water-line was being gradually narrowed by the blockaders. An attack on Mobile became therefore the next naval project of importance, and one of great moment to the Union.

Early in January, 1864, Farragut ran up his flag on the *Hartford* and headed for the Gulf. Many wearisome and anxious months were still to be spent on blockade duty, which told severely on his health and nerves. Gloomy days followed one another, days "to try men's hearts," as Farragut writes, when the wind howled, the rain poured down in torrents, and the cabin was afloat in water. While the tedious work of blockading was going on, and Farragut was completing the preparations for the attack on Mobile, the Confederates were making elaborate arrangements to receive him. The defences at Fort Morgan were being powerfully strengthened, and the formidable ironclad *Tennessee*, which had been in process of construction, was finished and ready for action.

It had been Farragut's ardent wish to attack Mobile immediately after the fall of New Orleans, at a time when the Confederates were still unprepared to make serious resistance, and when he could, without great difficulty, have carried through the enterprise with his fleet of wooden ships. But as the government had not then permitted him to put his plan into execution, the enemy had, in the long interval, been given the opportunity to con-

centrate their efforts, and increase their activity in its defence. The project had become so much more formidable, that Farragut was obliged to wait for a reënforcement of ironclads. These began to arrive toward the last of June. On the 31st of July Farragut writes, off Mobile: "The monitors have all arrived, except the *Tecumseh*, and she is at Pensacola, and I hope will be here in two days."

As early as the 26th of May he had written to Admiral Bailey: "I am watching Buchanan in the ram *Tennessee*. . . . I can see his boats very industriously laying down torpedoes." On both sides the preparations for the fast-approaching contest went on with zeal and activity. At last the memorable day fixed upon for the attack arrived. Mentally as well as professionally Farragut had made ready for the conflict with a firmness and stern determination which showed that he realized the heavy responsibility and the serious risks that lay before him, and understood the desperate nature of the undertaking which was destined to be the crowning glory of his career. His general order opened with the emphatic words, "Strip your vessels and prepare for the conflict."

On the night of the 5th of August, 1864, the whole of the Union fleet rode at anchor outside the harbor of Mobile. The defences of the bay were formidable and carefully devised. The only deep-water channel for the passage of ships lay directly under the guns of Fort Morgan, the waters

of the bay being for the most part shallow. Across the entrance, from Fort Gaines to the edge of the deep channel, the Confederates had driven a double line of stakes, and in the channel itself they had sunk a triple row of torpedoes and submarine mortar-batteries.

Within the harbor and above Fort Morgan lay the Confederate fleet, commanded by Admiral Buchanan. Consisting of three gunboats and the ironclad ram *Tennessee* it was small in point of numbers, but formidable from the strength of the *Tennessee*, an improvement on the *Merrimac*, and the most powerful ironclad constructed in the South.

Against this array of forts, vessels, and submarine mines, Admiral Farragut commanded a fleet of twenty-one wooden vessels and four monitors.

Every preparation having been made for the approaching battle, Admiral Farragut, in the silent watches of the night, went below into his cabin, as Nelson had done before him at Trafalgar, and wrote to his wife: "I am going into Mobile Bay in the morning, if God is my leader, as I hope He is, and in Him I place my trust." At half-past five next morning, while the admiral was quietly breakfasting, he said to his fleet-captain, "Well, Drayton, we might as well get under way," and an hour later the line of battle moved slowly into the bay. Lashed together two by two, the vessels sailed in pairs, a smaller with a larger

ship, the *Brooklyn* leading the column, and followed by Farragut's flag-ship, the *Hartford*. Ahead, in single file, went the four monitors, led by the *Tecumseh*.

Farragut had taken his stand in the rigging close under the maintop, from where he could clearly see the progress of the battle. The *Tecumseh* fired the first two shots, and was the first to attempt the dangerous crossing of the line of torpedoes. The monitor had singled out the *Tennessee*, and was bearing down upon her. She was within a hundred yards of the Confederate ram, when a sudden explosion was heard, and the *Tecumseh*, having struck a torpedo, plunged head foremost, with her colors still flying, to the bottom of the channel.

The critical moment of the fight had now come. The wooden vessels backed upon one another, and became entangled in what seemed to be inextricable confusion. The line of battle was doubled up in the most dangerous part of the passage; the ships were at the mercy of the guns of the fort and of the enemy's vessels.

The brilliant daring of Farragut at this crucial moment, his prompt decision and bold action, were the qualities that won the day at Mobile, as they were on that May day when Dewey entered the harbor of Manila.

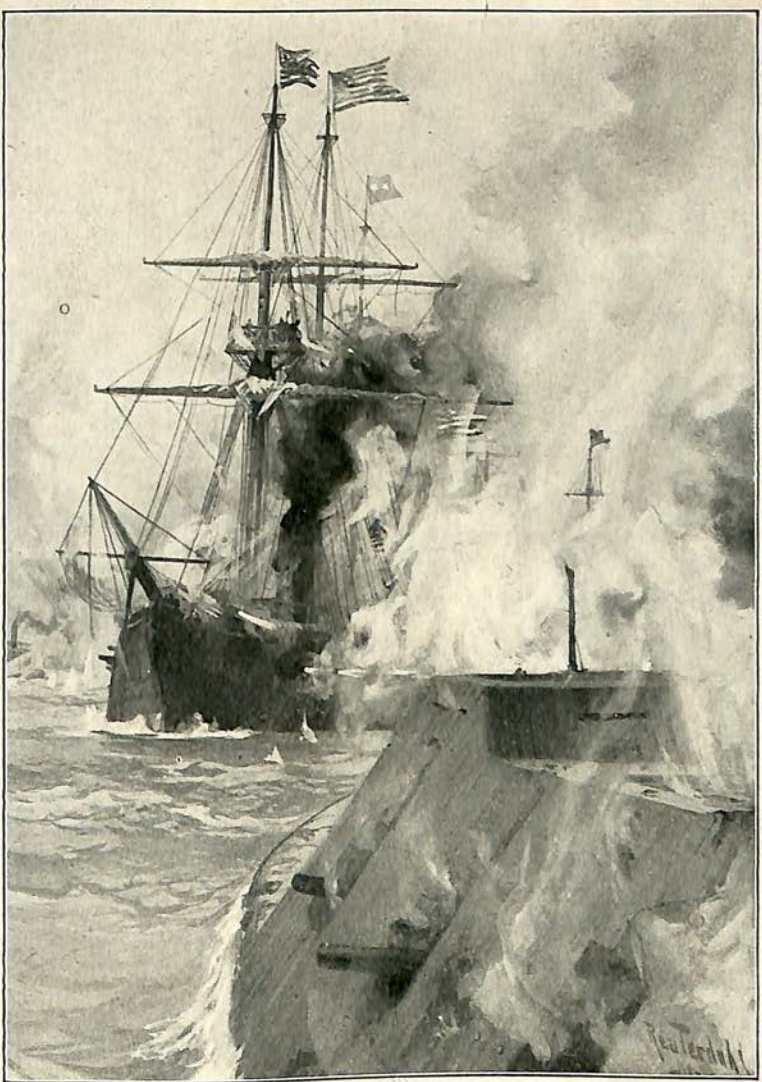
Seeing that the *Brooklyn* wavered, after the terrible disaster of the *Tecumseh*, the admiral sig-

nalled, "What's the trouble?" The answer came, "Torpedoes ahead!" Then followed Farragut's famous reply, which will go down in history: "Damn the torpedoes! Go ahead. Four bells [full speed]!"

The admiral's flag-ship, the *Hartford*, now took the lead. On she went, full speed, straight for the line of torpedoes. Complete silence fell upon the crew as the flag-ship passed the fatal line. A scraping sound was heard against the copper bottom of the vessel, but no explosion followed, and as the war-ship cleared the submarine defences with flying colors, the victory was practically won. After a short delay the other vessels followed their admiral across the line and up into the bay.

During all this time the Union ships had been exposed to a galling fire from the forts and the gunboats, answering with their own formidable broadsides and moving in a very storm of shot, which inflicted heavy losses and great damage.

Fort Morgan and the line of torpedoes had been bravely passed, the Confederate gunboats had surrendered or taken to flight, and the various vessels of Farragut's fleet were brought to anchor around the flag-ship in the upper part of the bay. At this stage in the conflict, Admiral Buchanan made his great mistake. Instead of remaining under the protecting batteries of Fort Morgan, he brought the *Tennessee* up the bay, inviting a single-



Farragut at Mobile Bay.

handed fight with the entire Union fleet. It was a charge of splendid daring, but ill-advised and purposeless.

Farragut's men had been leisurely eating their breakfast and clearing the decks from the débris of the battle, expecting several hours of quiet, when the warning cry, "The ram is coming!" ran through the ranks. Instantly the order was given, "Attack the ram . . . at full speed," and the great ramming struggle began.

Again and again the big wooden vessels charged, bows on, and struck the enemy's ironclad. Blow followed blow, and still the *Tennessee* stood impregnable. The shot of the broadsides glanced harmlessly from her armored sides.

After a while the monitors joined in the contest, and the continuous hammering was kept up, while shot after shot shook the great frame of the *Tennessee*. At last the rudder-chains were shot away, the smokestack was broken, the ship became helpless, and Admiral Buchanan was wounded in the leg. The command was taken by Captain Johnston, who for twenty minutes longer held out against the fearful pounding, and then, damaged and disabled, the *Tennessee* ran up the white flag and surrendered.

Thus was the great fight ended, and Farragut left master of the bay. It was the most brilliant achievement of his life — a victory seized from the brink of overwhelming disaster, dependent upon

the instant flash of resolution and the noble courage which inspired him, without a moment's hesitation, to lead his baffled column into the very jaws of destruction and wrench from fortune a splendid triumph.

Deeds of gallantry and heroism, which aroused the admiration of the entire land, brightened these scenes of horror; and the zeal and skill of the officers, the discipline of the crews, and the splendid marksmanship of the gunners brought out the highest commendations from Farragut. On both sides the courage of the men was only equalled by the remarkable daring of the two admirals; but with Buchanan this amounted to recklessness, with Farragut it was genius.

"This was the most desperate battle I ever fought since the days of the old *Essex*," writes Farragut after the victory. Thus the opening and the closing scenes in his long naval career were the most stirring and stormy of his entire life.

After the entrance into Mobile Bay, the surrender of Forts Morgan and Gaines, and the destruction of Fort Powell, Farragut remained in the bay until November, overseeing the work of raising the torpedoes and clearing the channel. The long strain of work, responsibility, and excitement was gradually exhausting his vigorous body. Writing to the Secretary of the Navy, he pleads his poor health and asks for rest. "As long as I am able, I am willing to do the bidding

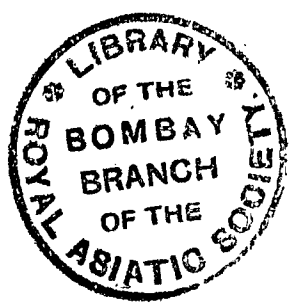
of the department to the best of my abilities. I fear, however, my health is giving way. The last six months have been a severe drag upon me, and I want rest if it is to be had."

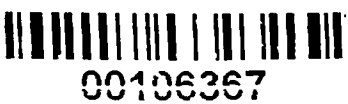
Sailing north toward the close of November, he steamed into New York harbor on the 12th of December, 1864. Later in the month a bill was introduced into Congress, and passed by both houses, creating the grade of vice-admiral, and naming Farragut as the first officer to receive the new rank in the United States navy. And in 1866 he was raised to the new grade of admiral which was then created by Congress.

In New York Farragut was received with admiring enthusiasm. He had won a place in the affection of his countrymen which no other hero could ever claim. Wherever he went, eager crowds greeted him with every demonstration of joy and gratitude. Not only in his own country, but throughout Europe, which he afterward visited as commander of the European squadron, honors and attentions were lavished upon him by crowned heads, by men of his own profession, and by the people. Whether in Great Britain, Spain, France, or Italy, the same flattering welcome awaited him, and the same enthusiastic ovations were showered upon him. At Malta the large British squadron of the Mediterranean, which was ready to start on a cruise to the Levant, was purposely delayed that it might do honor to the great American

admiral, whose renown had penetrated to the most remote corners of foreign lands.

Let us leave our greatest naval hero, and the most famous seaman of his generation, as every man of action would wish to be left, in the fulness and completion of his work. On his last sea voyage in the summer of 1870, as he stood on deck and looked wistfully up at his blue flag flying in the wind, he said: "It would be well if I died *now*, in harness." A few weeks after speaking these words, when he was sixty-nine years of age, he passed quietly away at the house of a friend, on the 14th of August, 1870.


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